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THE COMPLETE POEMS OF
ANNE BRONTË



The Complete Poems of
ANNE BRONTË, Edited
by CLEMENT SHORTER, now for
the first time collected, with a
Bibliographical Introduction by
C. W. HATFIELD ❧ ❧ ❧

New  York

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INTRODUCTION ¹

By CHARLOTTE BRONTË

IN looking over my sister Anne's papers, I find mournful evidence that religious feeling had been to her but too much like what it was to Cowper; I mean, of course, in a far milder form. Without rendering her a prey to those horrors that defy concealment, it subdued her mood and bearing to a perpetual pensiveness; the pillar of a cloud glided constantly before her eyes; she ever waited at the foot of a secret Sinai, listening in her heart to the voice of a trumpet sounding long and waxing louder. Some, perhaps, would rejoice over these tokens of sincere though sorrowing piety in a deceased relative: I own, to me they seem sad, as if her whole innocent life had been passed under the martyrdom of an unconfessed physical pain: their effect, indeed, would be too distressing, were it not combated by the certain knowledge that in her last moments this tyranny of a too tender conscience was overcome; this pomp of terrors broke up, and, passing away,

¹ Prefixed to *Selections from Poems by Acton Bell*, first published in the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey*.

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left her dying hour unclouded. Her belief in God did not then bring to her dread, as of a stern Judge—but hope, as in a Creator and Saviour : and no faltering hope was it, but a sure and steadfast conviction, on which, in the rude passage from Time to Eternity, she threw the weight of her human weakness, and by which she was enabled to bear what was to be borne, patiently—serenely—victoriously.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

IN this collection of the poems of Anne Brontë the whole of her published poems are brought together for the first time in a single volume.

There are fifty-four poems altogether, and of these Anne Brontë published only twenty-four.

To the first book published by the three sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë, *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*, Anne contributed twenty-one poems. This was the little volume, published in 1846, of which only two copies were sold, and which is now so prized that an amount equal to the total cost of production of the whole first edition can be easily obtained for a single copy.

One poem appears in Anne's novel, *Agnes Grey*, and another in that of her second and last novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*; in which book (vol. ii. p. 41) appears also a single verse which may or may not have been composed by her. Here is the verse :—

‘Stop, poor sinner, stop and think
Before you further go;
No longer sport upon the brink
Of everlasting woe.’

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The last poem published by Anne Brontë was 'The Three Guides,' which appeared in the August, 1848, number of *Fraser's Magazine*.

Mrs. Gaskell, in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, 1857, vol. i. p. 343, records a short conversation between Anne Brontë and a friend, who

'saw Anne with a number of *Chambers's Journal*, and a gentle smile of pleasure stealing over her placid face as she read.

"What is the matter?" asked the friend. "Why do you smile?"

"Only because I see they have inserted one of my poems," was the quiet reply.'

No poem by Anne Brontë has been found in *Chambers's Journal*. On p. 300 of the Haworth edition of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, 1900, there is a note by Mr. Clement Shorter, in which we are informed that the editor of *Chambers's Journal*, Mr. C. E. S. Chambers, had endeavoured, without success, to identify Anne's poem; and Mr. T. J. Wise, in his *Bibliography of the Brontës*, 1917, p. 215, informs us that

'A minute and careful search through the pages of the *Journal* has failed to discern a single poem which could by any possibility be attributed to Anne.'

My own opinion is that, if the incident recorded by Mrs. Gaskell is true, the name *Fraser's*

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Magazine should be substituted for *Chambers's Journal*; although I can find no record of any meeting between Anne Brontë and Ellen Nussey (the friend mentioned by Mrs. Gaskell) about the time that 'The Three Guides' was printed.

In the year 1850, a little more than twelve months after Anne Brontë died, nine poems by her, of which seven were unpublished, were selected by Charlotte Brontë for publication in a new edition of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*.

The remaining twenty-three 'unpublished' poems have been printed during the last twenty years. Most of them have appeared in limited editions only, and are now reprinted for the first time.

In her novel, *Agnes Grey*, Anne Brontë says :—

'When we are harassed by sorrows or anxieties, or long oppressed by any powerful feelings which we must keep to ourselves, for which we can obtain or seek no sympathy from any living creature, and which yet we cannot, or will not wholly crush, we often naturally seek relief in poetry . . . whether in the effusions of others, which seem to harmonise with our own existing case, or in our own attempts to give utterance to those thoughts and feelings in strains less musical, perchance, but more appropriate, and therefore more penetrating and sympathetic, and for the time more soothing, or more powerful to rouse and to unburden the oppressed and swollen

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heart. . . . I had sought relief twice or thrice at this secret source of consolation, and now I flew to it again with greater avidity than ever, because I seemed to need it more. . . . Lest the reader should be curious to see any of these effusions I will favour him with one short specimen : cold and languid as the lines may seem, it was almost a passion of grief to which they owed their being :—

“Oh, they have robbed me of the hope”

[see p. 95].

‘Yes, at least they could not deprive me of that : I could think of him day and night ; and I could feel that he was worthy to be thought of. Nobody knew him as I did ; nobody could appreciate him as I did ; nobody could love him as I —— could, if I might : but there was the evil. . . . Yet, if I found such deep delight in thinking of him, and if I kept those thoughts to myself, and troubled no one else with them, where was the harm of it ? . . .’

In August 1839, a few years before the foregoing extract was written, there arrived in Haworth ‘a lively, handsome young man, fresh from Durham University.’ This was the Rev. William Weightman, whom Charlotte Brontë in one of her letters calls ‘our bonny-faced friend the curate of Haworth,’ and in another writes of him as being ‘as bonny, pleasant, light-hearted, good-tempered, careless, fickle, and unclerical as ever.’ During the ensuing three years

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the sombre atmosphere of Haworth Parsonage was dispelled by the constant visits of this gay young clergyman. The incumbent's daughters were kept in a continual flutter of excitement, and there is no doubt that he was more than ordinarily attentive to Anne.

Charlotte says in one of her letters, 'He sits opposite to Anne at church, sighing softly, and looking out of the corners of his eyes, and Anne is so quiet, her look so downcast, they are a picture.'

But Anne was not allowed to remain long at home and enjoy such pleasant company. Early in the year 1841 she commenced her duties as a governess at Thorp Green, near York, and soon afterwards she wrote her pathetic little outcry, 'Appeal'; and probably the verses included in *Agnes Grey* belong to this time, although in the chronological table the year assigned to them is that in which the novel was written.

This one little romance of Anne's was soon ended. On the 6th September 1842 the Rev. William Weightman died after a very short illness, and a few days afterwards was buried in the north aisle of Haworth Church.

That Anne did not forget him as the years went by may be gathered from her poems, 'A Reminiscence,' 'Night,' and 'Severed and gone'; and,

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in permitting herself to dwell on the 'might-have-beens' of life, he became the 'Rev. Edward Weston,' and she the 'Agnes Grey' of her first novel.

For the whole of the previously unpublished material which this book contains, such as dates of poems, variations in words and lines, and additional lines and stanzas, I am indebted to Mr. Clement Shorter, the owner of the copyright of the unpublished Brontë manuscripts, who with characteristic generosity sent me all his typewritten transcripts of Anne Brontë's poems copied from the author's original manuscripts.

I must also acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. T. J. Wise for the help which I have received from his wonderfully complete and accurate book, *A Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of the Members of the Brontë Family*, published in 1917.

All the poems by Anne Brontë enumerated by Mr. Wise in the bibliography are included in this collection of her poems. My own search for others has proved fruitless; and I am quite sure that if there had been any Mr. Wise would have found them.

C. W. HATFIELD.

June 26, 1920.

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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE COMPLETE POEMS OF ANNE BRONTË (ACTON BELL)

Born at Thornton, near Bradford, Yorkshire, January 17, 1820.

Died at Scarborough, Yorkshire, May 28, 1849.

NOTE.—The books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc., mentioned in the following list are those in which the poems indicated were first printed.

(a)

Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell.

London: Aylott and Jones, 8, Paternoster
Row. 1846.

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(b)

Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey. In three
volumes.

London: Thomas Cautley Newby, Publisher,
72, Mortimer St., Cavendish Sq. 1847.

Volume III. *Agnes Grey.* By ACTON BELL.
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(c)

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. In three volumes.

By ACTON BELL.

London: T. C. Newby, Publisher, 72, Mortimer
Street, Cavendish Square. 1848.

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Fraser's Magazine. August 1848.

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Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey. By ELLIS
and ACTON BELL. A New Edition revised,
with . . . A Selection from their Literary
Remains.

London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 65, Cornhill.
1850.

Poems by Acton Bell:

25	DESPONDENCY. I have gone backward in the work ; (p.491)	26
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(f)

Self-Communion. A Poem by ANNE BRONTË.

Edited by Thomas J. Wise.

London: Privately printed. 1900.

Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

32	SELF-COMMUNION. The mist is resting on the hill ; (pp. 11-40)	131
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(g)

Poems by Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë.

New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company.

1902. Edition limited to 110 copies.

Poems by Anne Brontë:

33	THE CAPTAIN'S DREAM. Methought I saw him, but I knew him not, (pp. 185-186)	1
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(h)

The Complete Poems of Emily Brontë.

London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1910.

Edition limited to 1000 copies.

Poem by Anne Brontë (see note on p. 94):

45 There let thy bleeding branch atone (p. 251)	94
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(i)

Brontë Poems. Edited by Arthur C. Benson.

London: Smith, Elder & Co., 15, Waterloo
Place. 1915.

Poems by Anne Brontë:

46 THE DUNGEON. Though not a breath can enter here, (pp. 291-293)	57
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(j)

Dreams and Other Poems. By ANNE BRONTË.

London : Printed for Thomas J. Wise, Hampstead, N.W. 1917.

Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

52	CALL ME AWAY. Call me away, there's nothing here (pp. 9-12)	61
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NOTE

THE poems in this volume which bear fictitious signatures or initials in addition to the signature or initials of Anne Brontë, and several others which are unsigned, belong to the Gondal cycle.

For several years Anne and Emily Brontë collaborated in writing about the Gondals, who appear to have been a princely race occupying a mountainous northern country :—

‘ Who that has breathed that heavenly air,
To Northern climes would come,
To Gondal’s mists and moorlands drear,
And sleet and frozen gloom ? ’

(EMILY BRONTË)

Of their writings, *The Gondal Plays* and *The Gondal Chronicles*, only the poems have survived, and those by Anne Brontë are included in this volume.

THE CAPTAIN'S DREAM

METHOUGHT I saw him, but I knew him not,
He was so changed from what he used to be ;
There was no redness in his woe-worn cheeks,
No sunny smile upon his ashy lips ;
His hollow, wandering eyes looked wild and fierce,
And grief was printed on his marble brow ;
And, oh, I thought he clasped his wasted hands,
And raised his haggard eyes to Heaven, and
prayed
That he might die. I had no power to speak ;
I thought I was allowed to see him thus,
And yet I might not speak one single word ;
I might not even tell him that I lived,
And that it might be possible, if search were
made,
To find out where I was, and set me free.
Oh ! how I longed to clasp him to my heart,
Or but to hold his trembling hand in mine,
And speak one word of comfort to his mind.
I struggled wildly, but it was in vain :
I could not rise from my dark dungeon floor ;
And the dear name I vainly strove to speak
Died in a voiceless whisper on my tongue.

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Then I awoke, and, lo ! it was a dream.
A dream ? Alas ! it was reality ;
For well I know, wherever he may be,
He mourns me thus. Oh, Heaven ! I could
 bear
My deadly fate with calmness if there were
No kindred hearts to bleed and break for me.

ALEXANDRINA ZENOBIA. ANNE BRONTË.

Written January 24, 1838.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE NORTH WIND

THAT wind is from the North: I know it
well;

No other breeze could have so wild a swell.

Now deep and loud it thunders round my cell,

Then faintly dies, and softly sighs,

And moans and murmurs mournfully.

I know its language: thus it speaks to me:

‘ I have passed over thy own mountains dear,

Thy northern mountains, and they still
are free;

Still lonely, wild, majestic, bleak, and drear,

And stern, and lovely, as they used to be

‘ When thou, a young enthusiast,

As wild and free as they,

O’er rocks, and glens, and snowy heights,

Didst often love to stray.

‘ I’ve blown the pure, untrodden snows

In whirling eddies from their brows;

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And I have howled in caverns wild,
Where thou, a joyous mountain-child,
Didst dearly love to be.
The sweet world is not changed, but thou
Art pining in a dungeon now,
Where thou must ever be.

‘No voice but mine can reach thy ear,
And Heaven has kindly sent me here
To mourn and sigh with thee,
And tell thee of the cherished land
Of thy nativity.’

Blow on, wild wind ; thy solemn voice,
However sad and drear,
Is nothing to the gloomy silence
I have had to bear.

Hot tears are streaming from my eyes,
But these are better far
Than that dull, gnawing, tearless time,
The stupor of despair.

Confined and hopeless as I am,
Oh, speak of liberty !
Oh, tell me of my mountain home,
And I will welcome thee !

ALEXANDRINA ZENOBIA.

ANNE BRONTË, *January 26, 1838.*

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THE PARTING

I

THE chestnut steed stood by the gate,
His noble master's will to wait ;
The wooded park, so green and bright,
Was glowing in the morning light ;
The young leaves of the aspen trees
Were dancing in the morning breeze.
The palace door was open wide,
 The lord was standing there,
And his sweet lady by his side,
 With soft, dark eyes, and raven hair.
He, smiling, took her ivory hand,
And said, ' No longer here I stand ;
My charger shakes his flowing mane,
 And calls me with impatient neigh.
Adieu, then, till we meet again :
 Sweet love, I must no longer stay.'

' You must not go so soon,' she said,
 'I will not say "farewell" ;
The sun has not dispelled the shade
 In yonder dewy dell.

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Dark shadows of gigantic length
Are sleeping on the lawn,
And scarcely have the birds begun
To hail the summer morn.
Then stay with me a little while,
She said, with soft and sunny smile.

He smiled again, and did not speak,
But lightly kissed her rosy cheek,
And fondly clasped her in his arms ;
Then vaulted on his steed,
And down the park's smooth, winding
road,
He urged its flying speed.
Still by the door his lady stood
And watched his rapid flight
Until he reached a distant wood
That hid him from her sight.
But ere he vanished from her view
He waved to her a last ' Adieu ! '
Then onward, hastily, he steered,
And in the forest disappeared.

The lady smiled a pensive smile,
And heaved a gentle sigh ;
But her cheek was all unbleached the
while,
And tearless was her eye.

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‘ A thousand lovely flowers,’ she said,
‘ Are smiling on the plain,
And, ere one half of them are dead,
My lord will come again.
The leaves are waving fresh and green
On every stately tree,
And, long before they die away,
He will return to me ! ’
Alas ! fair lady, say not so :
Thou canst not tell the weight of woe
That lies in store for thee !

Those flowers will fade, those leaves will fall,
Winter will darken yonder hall,
Sweet spring will smile o’er hill and plain,
And trees and flowers will bloom again,
And years will still keep rolling on ;
But thy belovèd lord is gone !
His absence thou shalt deeply mourn,
And never smile on his return.

July 9, 1838.

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THE PARTING

II

THE lady of Abyerno's hall
Is waiting for her lord ;
The blackbird's song, the cuckoo's call,
No joy to her afford.
She smiles not at the summer's sun,
Nor at the winter's blast ;
She mourns that she is still alone
Though three long years have passed.

I knew her when her eye was bright,
I knew her when her step was light
And blithesome as a mountain doe's,
And when her cheek was like the rose,
And when her voice was full and free,
And when her smile was sweet to see.

But now the lustre of her eye
Is dimmed with many a tear ;
Her footstep's elasticity
Is timed with grief and fear.
The rose has left her hollow cheeks ;
In low and mournful tone she speaks,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And when she smiles, 'tis but a gleam
Of sunshine on a winter's day
That faintly beams through dreary clouds,
And in a moment dies away.
It does not warm, it does not cheer,
It makes us sigh for summer days
When fields are green and skies are clear,
And when the sun has kinder rays.

For three years she has waited there,
Still hoping for her lord's return ;
But vainly she may hope and fear,
And vainly watch and weep and mourn.
She may wait him till her hairs are grey,
And she may wear her life away,
But to his lady and his home
Her noble lord will never come.

' I wish I knew the worst,' she said,
' I wish I could despair :
These fruitless hopes, this constant dread,
Are more than I can bear.'

' Then do not hope, and do not weep :
He loved thee faithfully,
And nothing short of death could keep
So true a heart from thee.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Eliza, he would never go
And leave thee thus to mourn ;
He must be dead, for death alone
Could hinder his return.'

'Twas thus I spoke, because I felt
As if my heart would break
To see her thus so slowly pine
For Abyerno's sake.

But more than that I would not tell,
Though all the while I knew so well
The time and nature of his death ;
For when he drew his parting breath
His head was pillowed on my knee,
And his dark eyes were turned to me
With an agonised heart-breaking glance
Until they saw me not.
Oh ! the look of that dying man
Can never be forgot— !

ALEXANDRINA ZENOBIA, 1837.

ANNE BRONTË, *July 10, 1838.*

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

VERSES TO A CHILD

OH, raise those eyes to me again,
And smile again so joyously ;
And fear not, love ; it was not pain
Nor grief that drew those tears from me.
Belovèd child ! thou canst not tell
The thoughts that in my bosom swell
Whene'er I look on thee !

Thou knowest not that a glance of thine
Can bring back long-departed years,
And that thy blue eyes' magic shine
Can overflow my own with tears,
And that each feature, soft and fair,
And every curl of thy golden hair,
Some sweet remembrance bears.

Just then thou didst recall to me
A distant, long-forgotten scene ;
One smile, and one sweet word from thee
Dispelled the years that rolled between :
I was a little child again,
And every after joy and pain
Seemed never to have been.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Tall forest trees waved over me
To hide me from the heat of day,
And by my side a child like thee
Among the summer flowerets lay.
He was thy own, thou merry child :
Like thee he spoke, like thee he smiled,
Like thee he used to play.

Oh ! those were calm and happy days ;
We loved each other fondly then ;
But human love too soon decays,
And ours can never bloom again.
I never thought to see the day
When Florian's friendship would decay
Like that of colder men.

Now, Flora, thou hast but begun
To sail on life's deceitful sea ;
Oh ! do not err as I have done,
For I have trusted foolishly
The faith of every friend I loved :
I never doubted till I proved
Their heart's inconstancy.

'Tis mournful to look back upon
Those long departed joys and cares,
And I *will* weep since thou alone
Art witness to my streaming tears.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

This lingering love will not depart :
I cannot banish from my heart
The friend of childhood's years.

But, though thy father loves me not,
Yet shall I still be loved by thee ;
And, though I am by him forgot,
Say, wilt not thou remember me ?
I will not cause *thy* heart to ache ;
For thy regretted father's sake
I 'll love and cherish thee.

ALEXANDRINA ZENOBIA.

ANNE BRONTË, *August 21, 1838.*

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

SELF-CONGRATULATION

‘ ELLEN, you were thoughtless once ¹
Of beauty or of grace,
Simple and homely in attire,
Careless of form and face.
Then whence this change ? and wherefore
now
So often smooth your hair ? ²
And wherefore deck your youthful form
With such unwearied care ?

‘ Tell us, and cease to tire our ears
With that familiar strain ; ³
Why will you play those simple tunes
So often o’er again ? ’
‘ Indeed, dear friends, I can but say
That childhood’s thoughts are gone ;
Each year its own new feelings brings,
And years move swiftly on :

In the original MS. the following variations occur :—

¹ Line 1. Maiden, thou wert thoughtless once

² Lines 5 and 6. Then whence this change? and why so oft
Dost smooth thy hazel hair?

³ Line 10. With yonder hackneyed strain ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

‘ And for these little simple airs—
I love to play them o’er
So much—I dare not promise, now,
To play them nevermore.’
I answered—and it was enough ;
They turned them to depart ;
They could not read my secret thoughts,
Nor see my throbbing heart.

I ’ve noticed many a youthful form,
Upon whose changeful face
The inmost workings of the soul
The gazer well might trace ;
The speaking eye, the changing lip,
The ready blushing cheek,
The smiling, or beclouded brow,
Their different feelings speak.

But, thank God ! you might gaze on mine
For hours, and never know
The secret changes of my soul
From joy to keenest woe.
Last night, as we sat round the fire,
Conversing merrily,
We heard, without, approaching steps
Of one well known to me !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

There was no trembling in my voice,
No blush upon my cheek,
No lustrous sparkle in my eyes,
Of hope, or joy, to speak ;
But, oh ! my spirit burned within,
My heart beat full and fast !
He came not nigh—he went away—
And then my joy was past.

And yet my comrades marked it not :
My voice was still the same ;
They saw me smile, and o'er my face
No signs of sadness came.
They little knew my hidden thoughts ;
And they will *never* know
The aching anguish of my heart,
The bitter, burning woe !

OLIVIA VERNON.

Written January 1, 1840.

ANNE BRONTË.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE BLUEBELL

A FINE and subtle spirit dwells
In every little flower,
Each one its own sweet feeling breathes
With more or less of power.

There is a silent eloquence
In every wild bluebell,
That fills my softened heart with bliss
That words could never tell.

Yet I recall, not long ago,¹
A bright and sunny day :
'Twas when I led a toilsome life
So many leagues away.

That day along a sunny road
All carelessly I strayed
Between two banks where smiling flowers
Their varied hues displayed.

¹ Anne Brontë was a governess at Blake Hall, Mirfield, Yorkshire, from April 8, 1839, until January 1840.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Before me rose a lofty hill,
Behind me lay the sea ;
My heart was not so heavy then
As it was wont to be.

Less harassed than at other times
I saw the scene was fair,
And spoke and laughed to those around,
As if I knew no care.

But as I looked upon the bank,
My wandering glances fell
Upon a little trembling flower,
A single sweet bluebell.

Whence came that rising in my throat,
That dimness in my eyes ?
Why did those burning drops distil,
Those bitter feelings rise ?

Oh, that lone flower recalled to me
My happy childhood's hours,
When bluebells seemed like fairy gifts,
A prize among the flowers.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Those sunny days of merriment
When heart and soul were free,
And when I dwelt with kindred hearts
That loved and cared for me.

I had not then mid heartless crowds
To spend a thankless life,
In seeking after others' weal
With anxious toil and strife.

' Sad wanderer, weep those blissful times
That never may return ! '
The lovely floweret seemed to say,
And thus it made me mourn.

ANNE BRONTË,
August 22, 1840.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

AN ORPHAN'S LAMENT

SHE 's gone ; and twice the summer's sun
Has gilt Regina's towers,
And melted wild Angora's snows,
And warmed Epina's bowers.

The flowerets twice on hill and dale
Have bloomed and died away ;
And twice the rustling forest leaves
Have fallen to decay.

And thrice stern winter's icy hand
Has checked the rivers' flow,
And three times o'er the mountains thrown
His spotless robe of snow.

Two summers, springs, and autumns sad,
Three winters, cold and grey :
And is it then so long ago
That wild November day ?

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

They say such tears as children weep
Will soon be dried away ;
That childhood's grief, however strong,
Is only for a day ;

And parted friends, how dear soe'er,
Will soon forgotten be :
It may be so with other hearts ;
It is not so with me.

My mother, thou wilt weep no more,
For thou art gone above ;
But, can I ever cease to mourn
Thy fond and fervent love ?

While that was mine the world to me
Was sunshine bright and fair ;
No feeling rose within my heart
But thou couldst read it there.

And thou couldst feel for all my joys,
And all my childish cares,
And never weary of my play
Or scorn my foolish fears.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Beneath thy sweet maternal smile
All pain and sorrow fled ;
And even the very tears were sweet
Upon thy bosom shed.

Thy loss can never be repaired :
I shall not know again,
While life remains, the peaceful joy
That filled my spirit then.

Where shall I find a heart like thine
While life remains to me ?
And where shall I bestow the love
I ever bore for thee ?

January 1, 1841, A. Z.

ANNE BRONTË.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

LINES WRITTEN AT THORP GREEN ¹

THAT summer sun, whose genial glow
Now cheers my drooping spirit so,
 Must cold and silent be,
And only light our northern clime
With feeble ray, before the time
 I long so much to see.

And this soft, whispering breeze, that now
So gently cools my fevered brow,
 This too, alas ! must turn
To a wild blast, whose icy dart
Pierces and chills me to the heart,
 Before I cease to mourn.

And these bright flowers I love so well,
Verbena, rose, and sweet bluebell,
 Must droop and die away ;
Those thick, green leaves, with all their shade
And rustling music, they must fade,
 And every one decay.

¹ Anne Brontë was governess to the two daughters of the Rev. Edmund Robinson of Thorp Green, in the parish of Little Ouseburn, Yorkshire, from early in the year 1841 until June 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

But if the sunny, summer time,
And woods and meadows in their prime,
Are sweet to them that roam ;
Far sweeter is the winter bare,
With long, dark nights, and landscape drear,
To them that are at Home !

A. B., *August* 19, 1841.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

APPEAL ¹

Oh, I am very weary,
Though tears no longer flow ;
My eyes are tired of weeping,
My heart is sick of woe ;

My life is very lonely,
My days pass heavily,
I 'm weary of repining ;
Wilt thou not come to me ?

Oh, didst thou know my longings
For thee, from day to day,
My hopes, so often blighted,
Thou wouldst not thus delay !

ANNE BRONTË,
August 28, 1841.

¹ In the original MS. the title is, 'Lines written at Thorp Green.'

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

DESPONDENCY

I HAVE gone backward in the work,
The labour has not sped ;
Drowsy and dark my spirit lies,
Heavy and dull as lead.

How can I rouse my sinking soul
From such a lethargy ?
How can I break these iron chains
And set my spirit free ?

There have been times when I have mourned
In anguish o'er the past,
And raised my suppliant hands on high,
While tears fell thick and fast ;

And prayed to have my sins forgiven,
With such a fervent zeal,
An earnest grief, a strong desire,
As now I cannot feel.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And vowed to trample on my sins,
And called on Heaven to aid
My spirit in her firm resolves
And hear the vows I made.

And I have felt so full of love,
So strong in spirit then,
As if my heart would never cool,
Or wander back again.

And yet, alas ! how many times
My feet have gone astray !
How oft have I forgot my God !
How greatly fallen away !

My sins increase, my love grows cold,
And Hope within me dies :
Even Faith itself is wavering now ;
Oh, how shall I arise ?

I cannot weep, but I can pray,
Then let me not despair ;
Lord Jesus, save me, lest I die ;
Christ, hear my humble prayer ! ¹

December 20, 1841.

¹ Variation in the original MS. :—

And hear a wretch's prayer.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

TO COWPER

SWEET are thy strains, Celestial Bard ;
And oft, in childhood's years,
I 've read them o'er and o'er again,
With floods of silent tears.

The language of my inmost heart
I traced in every line ;
My sins, my sorrows, hopes, and fears,
Were there—and only mine.

All for myself the sigh would swell,
The tear of anguish start ;
I little knew what wilder woe
Had filled the Poet's heart.

I did not know the nights of gloom,
The days of misery :
The long, long years of dark despair,
That crushed and tortured thee.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

But they are gone ; from earth at length
Thy gentle soul is passed,
And in the bosom of its God
Has found its home at last.

It must be so, if God is love,
And answers fervent prayer ;
Then surely thou shalt dwell on high,
And I may meet thee there.

Is He the source of every good,
The spring of purity ?
Then in thine hours of deepest woe,
Thy God was still with thee.

How else, when every hope was fled,
Couldst thou so fondly cling
To holy things and holy men ?
And how so sweetly sing

Of things that God alone could teach ?
And whence that purity,
That hatred of all sinful ways—
That gentle charity ?

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Are *these* the symptoms of a heart
Of heavenly grace bereft—
For ever banished from its God,
To Satan's fury left ?

Yet, should thy darkest fears be true,
If Heaven be so severe,
That such a soul as thine is lost,—
Oh ! how shall *I* appear ?

ANNE BRONTË,
November 10, 1842.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

IN MEMORY OF A HAPPY DAY IN FEBRUARY

BLESSED be Thou for all the joy
My soul has felt to-day !
Oh, let its memory stay with me
And never pass away !

I was alone, for those I loved
Were far away from me ;
The sun shone on the withered grass,
The wind blew fresh and free.

Was it the smile of early spring
That made my bosom glow ?
'Twas sweet, but neither sun nor wind
Could raise my spirit so.

Was it some feeling of delight,
All vague and undefined ?
No, 'twas a rapture deep and strong,
Expanding in my mind !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Was it a sanguine view of life
And all its transient bliss—
A hope of bright prosperity ?
Oh, no ! it was not this.

It was a glimpse of truth divine
Unto my spirit given,
Illumined by a ray of light
That shone direct from Heaven !

I felt there was a God on high
By whom all things were made ;
I saw His wisdom and His power
In all His works displayed.

But most throughout the moral world
I saw His glory shine ;
I saw His wisdom infinite,
His mercy all divine.

Deep secrets of His providence
In darkness long concealed,
Unto the vision of my soul
Were graciously revealed.¹

¹ Variation in the original MS. :—

Were brought to my delighted eyes
And graciously revealed.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

But while I wondered and adored
His Majesty divine,
I did not tremble at His power :
I felt that God was mine.

I knew that my Redeemer lived ;
I did not fear to die ;
I felt that I should rise again
To immortality.

I longed to view that bliss divine
Which eye hath never seen ;
Like Moses, I would see His face ¹
Without the veil between.

*Begun in February—finished
November 10, 1842.*

¹ Variation in the original MS. :—

To see the glories of His face

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

LINES COMPOSED IN A WOOD ON A WINDY DAY¹

My soul is awakened, my spirit is soaring
And carried aloft on the wings of the breeze ;
For above and around me the wild wind is
roaring,
Arousing to rapture the earth and the seas.

The long withered grass in the sunshine is
glancing,
The bare trees are tossing their branches on high ;
The dead leaves beneath them are merrily
dancing,
The white clouds are scudding across the blue
sky.

I wish I could see how the ocean is lashing
The foam of its billows to whirlwinds of spray ;
I wish I could see how its proud waves are
dashing,
And hear the wild roar of their thunder to-day !

A. BRONTË,
December 30, 1842.

¹ ' Composed in the Long Plantation on a wild, bright, windy day.'
(*Note by the author in one MS.*)

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

A WORD TO THE ‘ ELECT ’ ¹

You may rejoice to think *yourselves* secure ;
You may be grateful for the gift divine—
That grace unsought, which made your black
 hearts pure,
And fits your earth-born souls in Heaven to
 shine.

But is it sweet to look around, and view
 Thousands excluded from that happiness
Which they deserve at least as much as you—
 Their faults not greater, nor their virtues less ?

And wherefore should you love your God the
 more,
Because to you alone His smiles are given ;
Because He chose to pass the *many* o’er,
And only bring the favoured *few* to Heaven ?

¹ The title in the original MS. is ‘ A Word to the Calvinists.’

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And wherefore should your hearts more grateful
prove,

Because for ALL the Saviour did not die ?
Is yours the God of justice and of love ?
And are your bosoms warm with charity ?

Say, does your heart expand to all mankind ?

And, would you ever to your neighbour do—
The weak, the strong, the enlightened, and the
blind—

As you would have your neighbour do to you ?

And when you, looking on your fellow-men,

Behold them doomed to endless misery,
How can you talk of joy and rapture then ?—
May God withhold such cruel joy from me !

That none *deserve* eternal bliss I know ;

Unmerited the grace in mercy given :
But none shall sink to everlasting woe,
That have not well deserved the wrath of
Heaven.

And, oh ! there lives within my heart

A hope, long nursed by me ;
(And should its cheering ray depart,
How dark my soul would be !)

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

That ' as in Adam *all* have died,
In Christ shall *all* men live ' ;
And ever round His throne abide,
Eternal praise to give.

That even the wicked shall at last
Be fitted for the skies ;
And when their dreadful doom is past,
To life and light arise.

I ask not how remote the day,
Nor what the sinners' woe,
Before their dross is purged away ;
Enough for me to know—

That when the cup of wrath is drained,
The metal purified,
They 'll cling to what they once disdained,
And live by Him that died.

ANNE BRONTË,
May 28, 1843.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE DOUBTER'S PRAYER

ETERNAL Power, of earth and air !
Unseen, yet seen in all around ;
Remote, but dwelling everywhere ;
Though silent, heard in every sound ;

If e'er Thine ear in mercy bent,
When wretched mortals cried to Thee,
And if, indeed, Thy Son was sent,
To save lost sinners such as me :

Then hear me now, while kneeling here,
I lift to Thee my heart and eye,
And all my soul ascends in prayer,
Oh, give me—give me Faith ! I cry.

Without some glimmering in my heart,
I could not raise this fervent prayer ;
But, oh ! a stronger light impart,
And in Thy mercy fix it there.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

While Faith is with me, I am blest ;
It turns my darkest night to day ;
But while I clasp it to my breast,
I often feel it slide away.

Then, cold and dark, my spirit sinks,
To see my light of life depart ;
And every fiend of Hell, methinks,
Enjoys the anguish of my heart.

What shall I do, if all my love,
My hopes, my toil, are cast away,
And if there be no God above,
To hear and bless me when I pray ?

If this be vain delusion all,
If death be an eternal sleep,
And none can hear my secret call,
Or see the silent tears I weep !

Oh, help me, God ! For Thou alone
Canst my distracted soul relieve ;
Forsake it not, it is Thine own,
Though weak, yet longing to believe.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Oh, drive these cruel doubts away ;
And make me know that Thou art God !
A faith, that shines by night and day,
Will lighten every earthly load.

If I believe that Jesus died,
And waking, rose to reign above ;
Then surely Sorrow, Sin, and Pride
Must yield to Peace, and Hope, and Love ;

And all the blessèd words He said
Will strength and holy joy impart :
A shield of safety o'er my head,
A spring of comfort in my heart.

A. BRONTË,
September 10, 1843.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE CAPTIVE DOVE ¹

Poor restless dove, I pity thee ;
And when I hear thy plaintive moan,
I mourn for thy captivity,
And in thy woes forget mine own.

To see thee stand prepared to fly,
And flap those useless wings of thine,
And gaze into the distant sky,
Would melt a harder heart than mine.

In vain—in vain ! Thou canst not rise ;
Thy prison roof confines thee there ;
Its slender wires delude thine eyes,
And quench thy longings with despair.

Oh, thou wert made to wander free
In sunny mead and shady grove,
And far beyond the rolling sea,
In distant climes, at will to rove !

¹ *Note by the author.*—Mostly written in the spring of 1842.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Yet, hadst thou but one gentle mate
Thy little drooping heart to cheer,
And share with thee thy captive state,
Thou couldst be happy even there.

Yes, even there, if, listening by,
One faithful dear companion stood ;
While gazing on her full bright eye,
Thou mightst forget thy native wood.

But thou, poor solitary dove,
Must make, unheard, thy joyless moan ;
The heart that Nature formed to love
Must pine, neglected, and alone.

A. BRONTË,
October 31, 1843.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE CONSOLATION

This poem was first printed in the 1846 volume of Poems. In 1850 it was included by Charlotte Brontë in her Selection from the Poems of Acton Bell, under the title of 'Lines Written from Home,' with the following note :—'My sister Anne had to taste the cup of life as it is mixed for the class termed "Governesses." The following are some of the thoughts that now and then solace a governess' :—

THOUGH bleak these woods, and damp the ground
With fallen leaves so thickly strown,
And cold the wind that wanders round
With wild and melancholy moan ;

There *is* a friendly roof I know,
Might shield me from the wintry blast ;
There is a fire, whose ruddy glow
Will cheer me for my wanderings past.

And so, though still, where'er I go,
Cold stranger-glances meet my eye ;
Though, when my spirit sinks in woe,
Unheeded swells the unbidden sigh ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Though solitude, endured too long,
Bids youthful joys too soon decay,
Makes mirth a stranger to my tongue,
And overclouds my noon of day ;

When kindly thoughts that would have way,
Flow back discouraged to my breast ;
I know there *is*, though far away,
A home where heart and soul may rest.

Warm hands are there, that, clasped in mine,
The warmer heart will not belie ;
While mirth, and truth, and friendship shine
In smiling lip and earnest eye.

The ice that gathers round my heart
May there be thawed ; and sweetly, then,
The joys of youth, that now depart,
Will come to cheer my soul again.

Though far I roam, that thought shall be
My hope, my comfort, everywhere ;
While such a home remains to me,
My heart shall never know despair !

ANNE BRONTË,
November 7, 1843.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

PAST DAYS

'Tis strange to think there *was* a time
When mirth was not an empty name,
When laughter really cheered the heart,
And frequent smiles unbidden came,
And tears of grief would only flow
In sympathy for others' woe ;

When speech expressed the inward thought,
And heart to kindred heart was bare,
And summer days were far too short
For all the pleasures crowded there ;
And silence, solitude, and rest,—
Now welcome to the weary breast—

Were all unprized, uncourted then ;
And all the joy one spirit showed,
The other deeply felt again ;
And friendship like a river flowed,
Constant and strong its silent course,
For nought withstood its gentle force :

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

When night, the holy time of peace,
Was dreaded as the parting hour ;
When speech and mirth at once must cease,¹
And silence must resume her power ;
Though ever free from pains and woes,
She only brought us calm repose.

And when the blessèd dawn again
Brought daylight to the blushing skies,
We woke, and not *reluctant* then,
To joyless *labour* did we rise ;
But full of hope, and glad and gay,
We welcomed the returning day.

ANNE BRONTË,
November 21, 1843.

¹ ' When friendly intercourse must cease,' is a variation in one MS.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE STUDENT'S SERENADE

I HAVE slept upon my couch,
But my spirit did not rest,
For the labours of the day
Yet my weary soul opprest ;

And before my dreaming eyes
Still the learnèd volumes lay,
And I could not close their leaves,
And I could not turn away.

While the grim preceptors laughed,
And exulted in my woe,
Till I felt my tingling frame
With the fire of anger glow.¹

But I oped my eyes at last,
And I heard a muffled sound ;
'Twas the night-breeze come to say
That the snow was on the ground.

¹ The third verse has not been previously published.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Then I knew that there was rest
On the mountain's bosom free ;
So I left my fevered couch,
And I flew to waken thee !

I have flown to waken thee—
For, if thou wilt not arise,
Then my soul can drink no peace
From these holy moonlight skies.

And this waste of virgin snow
To my sight will not be fair,
Unless thou wilt smiling come,
Love, to wander with me there.

Then, awake ! Maria, wake !
For, if thou couldst only know
How the quiet moonlight sleeps
On this wilderness of snow,

And the groves of ancient trees,
In their snowy garb arrayed,
Till they stretch into the gloom
Of the distant valley's shade ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Oh, I know thou wouldst rejoice
To inhale this bracing air ;
Thou wouldst break thy sweetest sleep
To behold a scene so fair.

O'er these wintry wilds, *alone*,
Thou wouldst joy to wander free ;
And it will not please thee less,
Though that bliss be shared with me.

ANNE BRONTË,
February 1844.

This poem is signed 'Alexander Hybernia' in the original MS.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

A REMINISCENCE

YES, thou art gone ! and never more
Thy sunny smile shall gladden me ;
But I may pass the old church door,
And pace the floor that covers thee.

May stand upon the cold, damp stone,
And think that, frozen, lies below
The lightest heart that I have known,
The kindest I shall ever know.

Yet, though I cannot see thee more,
'Tis still a comfort to have seen ;
And though thy transient life is o'er,
'Tis sweet to think that thou hast been ;

To think a soul so near divine,
Within a form so angel fair,
United to a heart like thine,
Has gladdened once our humble sphere.

April 1844.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

MEMORY

BRIGHTLY the sun of summer shone
Green fields and waving woods upon,
 And soft winds wandered by ;
Above, a sky of purest blue,
Around, bright flowers of loveliest hue,
 Allured the gazer's eye.

But what were all these charms to me,
When one sweet breath of memory
 Came gently wafting by ?
I closed my eyes against the day,
And called my willing soul away,
 From earth, and air, and sky ;

That I might simply fancy there
One little flower—a primrose fair,
 Just opening into sight ;
As in the days of infancy,
An opening primrose seemed to me
 A source of strange delight.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Sweet Memory ! ever smile on me ;
Nature's chief beauties spring from thee ;
 Oh, still thy tribute bring !
Still make the golden crocus shine
Among the flowers the most divine,
 The glory of the spring.

Still in the wallflower's fragrance dwell ;
And hover round the slight bluebell,
 My childhood's darling flower.
Smile on the little daisy still,
The buttercup's bright goblet fill
 With all thy former power.

For ever hang thy dreamy spell
Round mountain-star and heather-bell,
 And do not pass away
From sparkling frost, or wreathèd snow,
And whisper when the wild winds blow,
 Or rippling waters play.

Is childhood, then, so all divine ?
Or, Memory, is the glory thine,
 That haloes thus the past ?
Not *all* divine ; its pangs of grief
(Although, perchance, their stay be brief)
 Are bitter while they last.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Nor is the glory all thine own,
For on our earliest joys alone
That holy light is cast.
With such a ray, no spell of thine
Can make our later pleasures shine,
Though long ago they passed.

ANNE BRONTË,
May 19, 1844.

48 lines.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

FLUCTUATIONS

WHAT though the Sun had left my sky ;
To save me from despair
The blessèd Moon arose on high,
And shone serenely there.

I watched her, with a tearful gaze,
Rise slowly o'er the hill,
While through the dim horizon's haze
Her light gleamed faint and chill.

I thought such wan and lifeless beams
Could ne'er my heart repay
For the bright Sun's most transient gleams
That cheered me through the day.

But, as above that mist's control
She rose, and brighter shone,
I felt her light upon my soul ;
But now—that light is gone !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Thick vapours snatched her from my sight,
And I was darkling left,
All in the cold and gloomy night,
Of light and hope bereft :

Until, methought, a little star
Shone forth with trembling ray,
To cheer me with its light afar—
But that, too, passed away.

Anon, an earthly meteor blazed
The gloomy darkness through ;
I smiled, yet trembled while I gazed—
But that soon vanished too !

And darker, drearier fell the night
Upon my spirit then ;—
But what is that faint struggling light ?
Is it the Moon again ?

Kind Heaven ! increase that silvery gleam,
And bid these clouds depart,
And let her soft celestial beam
Restore my fainting heart !

ANNE BRONTË,
August 2, 1844.

36 lines.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

A PRAYER

MY God (oh, let me call Thee mine,
Weak, wretched sinner though I be),
My trembling soul would fain be Thine ;
My feeble faith still clings to Thee.

Not only for the past I grieve,
The future fills me with dismay ;
Unless Thou hasten to relieve,
Thy suppliant is a castaway.¹

I cannot say my faith is strong,
I dare not hope my love is great ;
But strength and love to Thee belong :
Oh, do not leave me desolate !

I know I owe my all to Thee ;
Oh, *take* the heart I cannot give ;
Do Thou my Strength, my Saviour be,
And *make* me to Thy glory live !

October 13, 1844.

¹ 'I know my heart will fall away.' in original MS.

This poem is included in the Baptist 'Hymnal.'

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE DUNGEON

THOUGH not a breath can enter here,
I know the wind blows fresh and free ;
I know the sun is shining clear
Though not a gleam can visit me.

They thought while I in darkness lay
'Twere pity that I should not know
How all the earth is smiling gay,
How fresh the vernal breezes blow.

They knew such tidings to impart
Would pierce my weary spirit through ;
And could they better read my heart,
They 'd tell me *she* was smiling too.

They need not, for I know it well,
Methinks I see her even now,
No sigh disturbs her bosom's swell,
No shade o'ercasts her angel brow.

Unmarred by grief her matchless voice,
Whence sparkling wit, and wisdom flow :
And others in its sound rejoice,
And taste the joys I must not know ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Drink rapture from her soft dark eye,
And sunshine from her heavenly smile ;
On wings of bliss their moments fly
And I am pining here the while !

Oh ! tell me, does she never give
To my distress a single sigh ?
She smiles on them, but does she grieve
One moment, when they are not by ?

When she beholds the sunny skies,
And feels the wind of heaven blow ;
Has she no tear for him that lies
In dungeon-gloom so far below ?

While others gladly round her press,
And at her side their hours beguile,
Has she no sigh for his distress,
Who cannot see a single smile,

Nor hear one word, nor read a line
That her belovèd hand might write ;
Who banished from her face must pine,
Each day a long, a lonely night ?

December 16, 1844.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

HOME

How brightly glistening in the sun
The woodland ivy plays !
While yonder beeches from their barks
Reflect his silver rays.

That sun surveys a lovely scene
From softly smiling skies ;
And wildly through unnumbered trees
The wind of winter sighs :

Now loud, it thunders o'er my head,
And now in distance dies.
But give me back my barren hills,
Where colder breezes rise ;

Where scarce the scattered, stunted trees
Can yield an answering swell,
But where a wilderness of heath
Returns the sound as well.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

For yonder garden, fair and wide,
With groves of evergreen,
Long winding walks, and borders trim,
And velvet lawns between—

Restore to me that little spot,
With grey walls compassed round,
Where knotted grass neglected lies,
And weeds usurp the ground.

Though all around this mansion high
Invites the foot to roam,
And though its halls are fair within—
Oh, give me back my HOME !

Undated, c. 1844.

Published in 1846.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

CALL ME AWAY

CALL me away, there 's nothing here
That wins my soul to stay ;
Then let me leave this prospect drear
And hasten far away.

To our belovèd land I 'll flee,
Our land of thought and soul,
Where I have roved so oft with thee
Beyond the world's control.

I 'll sit and watch those ancient trees,
Those Scotch firs dark and high,
I 'll listen as the eerie breeze
Tempt leaf and branch to sigh.

The glorious moon shines far above,
How soft her radiance falls
On snowy heights, on rock, and grove,
And yonder palace walls.

Who stands beneath yon fir-trees high ?
A youth so slight and fair,
But whose keen and restless azure eye
Proclaims him known to care.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Though white that brow it is not smooth :
Dark lines spread 'neath the hair ;
Though soft those features, yet in sooth
Stern sorrow has been there.

Now on the peaceful moon are fixed
Those eyes so clear and bright,
But trembling tear-drops hang betwixt,
And dim the blessèd sight.

Though late the hour and keen the blast
That whistles round him now,
Those raven locks are backward cast
To cool his burning brow.

*His hands above his heaving breast
Are clasped in agony ;
' O Father, Father, let me rest,
And call my soul to Thee !

*' I know 'tis weakness thus to pray,
But all this cankering care,
This doubt, tormenting night and day,
Is more than I can bear.

* The verses and lines marked with an asterisk (*) are now printed for the first time.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

‘ With none to comfort, none to guide,
And none to strengthen me,
Since thou, my only friend, hast died,
I ’ve pined to follow thee.
*Since thou hast died ! And did he live
*What comfort would his counsel give
*To one forlorn like me ?

‘ Would *he* my idol’s form adore :
Her soul, her glance, her tone,
And say, “ Forget for evermore
Her kindred, and thine own.
*Let dreams of her thy peace destroy,
*Leave every other hope of joy,
*And live for her alone ” ? ’

He starts, he smiles, and dries the tears
Still glistening on his cheek :
The lady of his soul appears,
And, hark ! I hear her speak.

‘ Aye, dry thy tears ! thou wilt not weep
While I am by thy side ;
Our foes their ceaseless watch may keep,
But cannot thus divide

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

‘ Such hearts as ours, and we to-night
Their malice will deride,
And in the pale moon’s silver light
Together will abide.

‘ No fear our present bliss shall blast,
And sorrow we ’ll defy ;
Do thou forget the dreary past,
The dreadful future, *I*.’

‘ Forget it ? Yes, while thou art by
I think of nought but thee ;
’Tis only when thou art not nigh
Remembrance tortures me.

‘ But such a lofty soul to find,
And such a heart as thine,
In such a glorious form enshrined,
*And still to call thee mine,
*Would be for earth too great a bliss
*Without a taint of woe like this,
Then why should I repine ? ’

January 24, 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

NIGHT

I LOVE the silent hour of night,
For blissful dreams may then arise,
Revealing to my charmèd sight
What may not bless my waking eyes.

And then a voice may meet my ear,
That death has silenced long ago ;
And hope and rapture may appear
Instead of solitude and woe.

Cold in the grave for years has lain
The form it was my bliss to see ;
And only dreams can bring again
The darling of my heart to me.

Written early in 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

DREAMS

WHILE on my lonely couch I lie,
I seldom feel my self alone,
For fancy fills my dreaming eye
With scenes and pleasures of its own.

Then I may cherish at my breast
An infant's form beloved and fair ;
May smile and soothe it into rest,
With all a mother's fondest care.

How sweet to feel its helpless form
Depending thus on me alone ;
And while I hold it safe and warm,
What bliss to think it is my own !

And glances then may meet my eyes
That daylight never showed to me ;
What raptures in my bosom rise
Those earnest looks of love to see !

To feel my hand so kindly prest,
To know myself beloved at last ;
To think my heart has found a rest,
My life of solitude is past !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

But then to wake and find it flown,
The dream of happiness destroyed ;
To find myself unloved, alone,
What tongue can speak the dreary void !

¹ A heart whence warm affections flow,
Creator, Thou hast given to me ;
And am I only thus to know
How sweet the joys of love would be ?

Spring 1845.

¹ The last verse of this poem was first printed by Mr. T. J. Wise
in *Dreams and Other Poems*, 1917.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

IF THIS BE ALL

O GOD ! if this indeed be all
That Life can show to me ;
If on my aching brow may fall
No freshening dew from Thee ;

If with no brighter light than this
The lamp of hope may glow
And I may only *dream* of bliss,
And wake to weary woe ;

If friendship's solace must decay,
When other joys are gone,
And love must keep so far away,
While I go wandering on,—

Wandering and toiling without gain,
The slave of others' will,
With constant care and frequent pain,
Despised, forgotten still ;

Grieving to look on vice and sin,
Yet powerless to quell
The silent current from within,
The outward torrent's swell ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

While all the good I would impart,
The feelings I would share,
Are driven backward to my heart,
And turned to wormwood there ;

If clouds must *ever* keep from sight
The glories of the Sun,
And I must suffer Winter's blight,
Ere Summer is begun :

If Life must be so full of care—
Then call me soon to Thee ;
Or give me strength enough to bear
My load of misery.

ANNE BRONTË,
May 20, 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

CONFIDENCE

OPPRESSED with sin and woe,
A burdened heart I bear,
Opposed by many a mighty foe ;
But I will not despair.

With this polluted heart,
I dare to come to Thee,
Holy and mighty as Thou art ;
For Thou wilt pardon me.

I feel that I am weak,
And prone to every sin ;
But Thou who giv'st to those who seek,
Wilt give me strength within.

Far as this earth may be
From yonder starry skies,
Remoter still am I from Thee ;
Yet Thou wilt not despise.

I need not fear my foes,
I need not yield to care,
I need not sink beneath my woes ;
For Thou wilt answer prayer.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

In my Redeemer's name
I give myself to thee ;
And all unworthy as I am,
My God will cherish me.

Oh, make me wholly Thine !
Thy love to me impart,
And let Thy holy Spirit shine
For ever on my heart !

June 1, 1845.

This poem is included in Dr. Hunter's 'Glasgow Hymnal'
and others.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

VIEWS OF LIFE

WHEN sinks my heart in hopeless gloom,
And life can show no joy for me ;
And I behold a yawning tomb,
Where bowers ¹ and palaces should be ;

In vain you talk of morbid dreams ;
In vain you gaily smiling say,
That what to me so dreary seems,
The healthy mind deems bright and gay.

I too have smiled, and thought like you,
But madly smiled, and falsely deemed :
² *Truth* led me to the present view,—
I 'm waking now—'twas *then* I dreamed.

I lately saw a sunset sky,
And stood enraptured to behold
Its varied hues of glorious dye :
First, fleecy clouds of shining gold ;

Variations in MS. :—

¹ towers.

² My present thoughts I know are true.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

These blushing took a rosy hue ;
 Beneath them shone a flood of green ;
Nor less divine, the glorious blue
 That smiled above them and between.

I cannot name each lovely shade ;
 I cannot say how bright they shone ;
But one by one, I saw them fade ;
 And what remained when they were gone ?

¹ Dull clouds remained, of sombre hue,
 And when their borrowed charm was o'er,
The azure sky had faded too,
 That smiled so softly bright before.

So, gilded by the glow of youth,
 Our varied life looks fair and gay ;
And so remains the naked truth,
 When that false light is past away.

Why blame ye, then, my keener sight,
 That clearly sees a world of woes
Through all the haze of golden light
 That flattering Falsehood round it throws ?

¹ Alternative verse in MS. :—

Grey clouds remained of gloomy hue,
 Their glory now was o'er ;
The sky grew dull and charmless too,
And cold and dim the very blue,
 That smiled so softly bright before.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

When the young mother smiles above
The first-born darling of her heart,
Her bosom glows with earnest love,
While tears of silent transport start.

Fond dreamer ! little does she know
The anxious toil, the suffering,
The blasted hopes, the burning woe,
The object of her joy will bring.

Her blinded eyes behold not now
When, soon or late, must be his doom ;
The anguish that will cloud his brow,
The bed of death, the dreary tomb.

As little know the youthful pair,
In mutual love supremely blest,
What weariness, and cold despair,
Ere long, will seize the aching breast.

And even should Love and Faith remain,
(The greatest blessings life can show),
Amid adversity and pain,
To shine throughout with cheering glow ;

They do not see how cruel Death
Comes on, their loving hearts to part :
One feels not now the gasping breath,
The rending of the earth-bound heart,—

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

The soul's and body's agony,
Ere she may sink to her repose :
The sad survivor cannot see
The grave above his darling close ;

Nor how, despairing and alone,
He then must wear his life away ;
And linger, feebly toiling on,
And fainting, sink into decay.

Oh, Youth may listen patiently,
While sad Experience tells her tale,
But doubt sits smiling in his eye,
For ardent Hope will still prevail.

He hears how feeble Pleasure dies,
By guilt destroyed, and pain and woe ;
He turns to Hope—and she replies,
' Believe it not—it is not so ! '

' Oh, heed her not ! ' Experience says ;
' For thus she whispered once to me ;
She told me, in my youthful days,
How glorious manhood's prime would be.

' When, in the time of early Spring,
Too chill the winds that o'er me passed,
She said, each coming day would bring
A fairer heaven, a gentler blast.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

‘ And when the sun too seldom beamed,
The sky, o’ercast, too darkly frowned,
The soaking rain too constant streamed,
And mists too dreary gathered round ;

‘ She told me, Summer’s glorious ray
Would chase those vapours all away,
And scatter glories round ;
With sweetest music fill the trees,
Load with rich scent the gentle breeze,
And strew with flowers the ground.

‘ But when, beneath that scorching ray,
I languished, weary through the day,
While birds refused to sing,
Verdure decayed from field and tree,
And panting Nature mourned with me
The freshness of the Spring,—

“ “ Wait but a little while,” she said,
“ Till Summer’s burning days are fled ;
And Autumn shall restore,
With golden riches of her own.
And Summer’s glories mellowed down,
The freshness you deplore.”

‘ And long I waited, but in vain :
That freshness never came again,
Though Summer passed away,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Though Autumn's mists hung cold and chill,
And drooping Nature languished still,
And sank into decay.

'Till wintry blasts foreboding blew
Through leafless trees—and then I knew
That Hope was all a dream.
But thus, fond youth, she cheated me ;
And she will prove as false to thee,
Though sweet her words may seem.'

Stern prophet ! Cease thy bodings dire—
Thou canst not quench the ardent fire
That warms the breast of youth.
Oh, let it cheer him while it may,
And gently, gently die away—
Chilled by the damps of truth !

Tell him, that earth is not our rest ;
Its joys are empty—frail at best ;
And point beyond the sky.
But gleams of light may reach us here ;
And Hope the *roughest* path can cheer ;
Then do not bid it fly !

Though hope may promise joys, that still
Unkindly time will ne'er fulfil ;
Or, if they come at all,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

We never find them unalloyed,—
Hurtful perchance, or soon destroyed,
They vanish or they pall ;

Yet hope *itself* a brightness throws
O'er all our labours and our woes ;
While dark foreboding Care
A thousand ills will oft portend,
That Providence may ne'er intend
The trembling heart to bear.

Or if they come, it oft appears,
Our woes are lighter than our fears,
And far more bravely borne.
Then let us not enhance our doom ;
But e'en in midnight's blackest gloom
Expect the rising morn.

Because the road is rough and long,
Shall we despise the skylark's song,
That cheers the wanderer's way ?
Or trample down, with reckless feet,
The smiling flowerets, bright and sweet,
Because they soon decay ?

Pass pleasant scenes unnoticed by,
Because the next is bleak and drear ;
Or not enjoy a smiling sky,
Because a tempest may be near ?

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

No ! while we journey on our way,
We 'll smile on ¹ every lovely thing ;
And ever, as they pass away,
To memory and hope we 'll cling.

And though that awful river flows
Before us, when the journey 's past,
Perchance of all the pilgrim's woes
Most dreadful—shrink not—'tis the last !

Though icy cold, and dark, and deep ;
Beyond it smiles that blessèd shore,
Where none shall suffer, none shall weep,
And bliss shall reign for evermore !

ANNE BRONTË,
June 1845.

Note by the author.—Wrote the first few verses in February or March, 1844.

Variation in MS. :—

¹ notice.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

SONG

WE know where deepest lies the snow,
And where the frost-winds keenest blow
 On every mountain brow.
We long have known and learnt to bear
The wandering outlaw's toil and care,
But where we late were hunted, there
 Our foes are hunted now.

¹ We have their princely homes, and they
To our wild haunts are chased away,
 Dark woods, and desert caves ;
And we can range from hill to hill,
And chase our vanquished victors still,
Small respite will they find, until
 They slumber in their graves.

¹ Extract from Anne Brontë's diary, Thursday, 31st July 1845 :—
' We have not yet finished our Gondal Chronicles that we began three
and a half years ago. . . . The Gondals are at present in a sad state.
The Republicans are uppermost, but the Royalists are not quite over-
come.'

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

But I would rather be the hare
That, crouching in its sheltered lair,
 Must start at every sound ;
That, forced from cornfields waving wide,
Is driven to seek the bare hillside,
Or in the tangled copse-wood hide,
 Than be the hunter's hound !

September 3, 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

SONG

COME to the banquet ; triumph in your songs !
Strike up the chords, and sing of ‘ Victory ! ’
The oppressed have risen to redress their wrongs,
The Tyrants are o’erthrown, the Land is free !
The Land is free ! Aye, shout it forth once
more ;
Is she not red with her oppressors’ gore ?

We are her champions ; shall we not rejoice ?
Are not the tyrants’ broad domains our own ?
Then wherefore triumph with a faltering voice ?
And talk of freedom in a doubtful tone ?
Have we not longed through life the reign to see
Of Justice, linked with Glorious Liberty ?

Shout you that will, and you that can rejoice
To revel in the riches of your foes.
In praise of deadly vengeance lift your voice ;
Gloat o’er your tyrants’ blood, your victims’
woes.

I ’d rather listen to the skylark’s songs,
And think on Gondal’s and my father’s wrongs.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

It may be pleasant to recall the death

Of those beneath whose sheltering roof you lie ;
But I would rather press the mountain-heath

With nought to shield me from the starry sky.
And dream of yet untasted Victory ;
A distant hope ; and feel that I am free !

Oh, happy life ! To rove ¹ the mountains wild,
The waving woods, or ocean's heaving breast,
With limbs unfettered, conscience undefiled,
And choosing where to wander, where to rest !
Hunted, opposed, but ever strong to cope
With toils and perils ; ever full of hope !

‘ Our flower is budding.’ When that word was
heard

On desert shore, or breezy mountain's brow ;
Wherever said, what glorious thoughts it stirred !
’Twas budding then ; say, ‘ Has it blossomed
now ? ’

Is *this* the end we struggled to obtain ?
Oh, for the wandering Outlaw's life again !

A. B., *September 4, 1845.*

¹ ‘ range ’ in original manuscript.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

VANITAS VANITATUM, OMNIA VANITAS

IN all we do, and hear, and see,
Is restless Toil and Vanity.
While yet the rolling earth abides,
Men come and go like ocean tides ;

And ere one generation dies,
Another in its place shall rise ;
That, sinking soon into the grave,
Others succeed, like wave on wave ;

And as they rise, they pass away.
The sun arises every day,
And hastening onward to the West,
He nightly sinks, but not to rest :

Returning to the eastern skies,
Again to light us, he must rise.
And still the restless wind comes forth,
Now blowing keenly from the North ;

Now from the South, the East, the West,
For ever changing, ne'er at rest.
The fountains, gushing from the hills,
Supply the ever-running rills ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

The thirsty rivers drink their store,
And bear it rolling to the shore,
But still the ocean craves for more.
'Tis endless labour everywhere !
Sound cannot satisfy the ear,

Light cannot fill the craving eye,
Nor riches half our wants supply,¹
Pleasure but doubles future pain,
And joy brings sorrow in her train ;

Laughter is mad, and reckless mirth—
What does she in this weary earth ?
Should Wealth, or Fame, our Life employ,
Death comes, our labour to destroy ;

To snatch the untasted cup away,
For which we toiled so many a day.
What, then, remains for wretched man ?
To use life's comforts while he can ;

Enjoy the blessings Heaven bestows ;
Assist his friends, forgive his foes ;
Trust God, and keep His statutes still,
Upright and firm, through good and ill ;

¹ ' Nor riches happiness supply,' in one MS.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Thankful for all that God has given,
Fixing his firmest hopes on Heaven ;
Knowing that earthly joys decay,
But hoping through the darkest day.

ANNE BRONTË,
September 4, 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

STANZAS

Oh, weep not, love ! each tear that springs
In those dear eyes of thine,
To me a keener suffering brings
Than if they flowed from mine.

And do not droop ! however drear
The fate awaiting thee ;
For *my* sake combat pain and care,
And cherish life for me !

I do not fear thy love will fail ;
Thy faith is true, I know ;
But, oh, my love ! thy strength is frail
For such a life of woe.

Were 't not for this, I well could trace
(Though banished long from thee)
Life's rugged path, and boldly face
The storms that threaten me.

Fear not for me—I 've steeled my mind
Sorrow and strife to greet ;
Joy with my love I leave behind,
Care with my friends I meet.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

A mother's sad, reproachful eye,
A father's scowling brow—
But he may frown and she may sigh :
I will not break my vow !

I love my mother, I revere
My sire, but fear¹ not me—
Believe that Death alone can tear
This faithful heart from thee.

ZERONA.

A. BRONTË.

October 1, 1845.

¹ 'doubt' in one MS., in which the title of the poem is 'Parting address from Z. L. to A. E.,' and the name 'Zerona' is given at the end of the poem.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE PENITENT ¹

I MOURN with thee, and yet rejoice
That thou shouldst sorrow so ;
With angel choirs I join my voice
To bless the sinner's woe.

Though friends and kindred turn away,
And laugh thy grief to scorn ;
I hear the great Redeemer say,
‘ Blessèd are ye that mourn.’

Hold on thy course, nor deem it strange
That earthly cords are riven :
Man may lament the wondrous change,
But ‘ there is joy in Heaven ! ’

1845.

In the original MS. this poem has no title, but is headed
‘ Fragment, 1845.’

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE ARBOUR

I 'LL rest me in this sheltered bower,
And look upon the clear blue sky
That smiles upon me through the trees,
Which stand so thickly clustering by ;

And view their green and glossy leaves,
All glistening in the sunshine fair ;
And list the rustling of their boughs,
So softly whispering through the air.

And while my ear drinks in the sound,
My wingéd soul shall fly away ;
Reviewing long departed years
As one mild, beaming, autumn day ;

And soaring on to future scenes,
Like hills and woods, and valleys green,
All basking in the summer's sun,
But distant still, and dimly seen.

Oh, list ! 'tis summer's very breath
That gently shakes the rustling trees—
But look ! the snow is on the ground—
How can I think of scenes like these ?

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

'Tis but the *frost* that clears the air,
And gives the sky that lovely blue ;
They 're smiling in a *winter's* sun,
Those evergreens of sombre hue.

And winter's chill is on my heart—
How can I dream of future bliss ?
How can my spirit soar away,
Confined by such a chain as this ?

Undated, c. 1845.
Published in 1846.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

MUSIC ON CHRISTMAS MORNING

MUSIC I love—but never strain
 Could kindle raptures so divine,
So grief assuage, so conquer pain,
 And rouse this pensive heart of mine—
As that we hear on Christmas morn
Upon the wintry breezes borne.

Though Darkness still her empire keep,
 And hours must pass, ere morning break ;
From troubled dreams, or slumbers deep,
 That music *kindly* bids us wake :
It calls us, with an angel's voice,
To wake, and worship, and rejoice ;

To greet with joy the glorious morn,
 Which angels welcomed long ago,
When our redeeming Lord was born,
 To bring the light of Heaven below ;
The Powers of Darkness to dispel,
And rescue Earth from Death and Hell.

While listening to that sacred strain,
 My raptured spirit soars on high ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

I seem to hear those songs again
 Resounding through the open sky,
That kindled such divine delight,
In those who watched their flocks by night.

With them I celebrate His birth—
 Glory to God in highest Heaven,
Good-will to men, and peace on earth,
 To us a Saviour-king is given ;
Our God is come to claim His own,
And Satan's power is overthrown !

A sinless God, for sinful men,
 Descends to suffer and to bleed ;
Hell *must* renounce its empire then ;
 The price is paid, the world is freed,
And Satan's self must now confess
That Christ has earned a *Right* to bless :

Now holy Peace may smile from Heaven,
 And heavenly Truth from earth shall spring ;
The captive's galling bonds are riven,
 For our Redeemer is our King ;
And He that gave His blood for men
Will lead us home to God again.

Undated, c. 1845.
Published in 1846.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THERE LET THY BLEEDING BRANCH ATONE

THERE let thy bleeding branch atone
For every torturing tear.
Shall my young sins, my sins alone,
Be everlasting here ?

Who bade thee keep that carvèd name
A pledge for memory ?
As if oblivion ever came
To breathe its bliss on me ;

As if through all the 'wilderling maze
Of mad hours left behind
I once forgot the early days
That thou wouldst call to mind.

Undated, c. 1845.

The MS. of the above poem was found amongst some MSS. of unpublished poems by Emily Brontë. It is unsigned and in the minute characters resembling Emily Brontë's microscopic writing, and was first published as a poem by her. In *Brontë Poems*, 1915, it was first printed as a poem by Anne Brontë.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

OH, THEY HAVE ROBBED ME OF THE HOPE

OH, they have robbed me of the hope
My spirit held so dear ;
They will not let me hear that voice
My soul delights to hear.

They will not let me see that face
I so delight to see ;
And they have taken all thy smiles,
And all thy love from me.

Well, let them seize on all they can ;—
One treasure still is mine,—
A heart that loves to think on thee,
And feels the worth of thine.

Undated, c. 1845.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

DOMESTIC PEACE

WHY should such gloomy silence reign,
And why is all the house so drear,
When neither danger, sickness, pain,
Nor death, nor want, has entered here ?

We are as many as we were
That other night, when all were gay
And full of hope, and free from care ;
Yet is there something gone away.

The moon without, as pure and calm,
Is shining as that night she shone ;
But now, to us, she brings no balm,
For something from our hearts is gone.

Something whose absence leaves a void—
A cheerless want in every heart ;
Each feels the bliss of all destroyed,
And mourns the change—but each apart.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

The fire is burning in the grate
As redly as it used to burn ;
But still the hearth is desolate,
Till mirth, and love, with *peace* return.

'Twas *peace* that flowed from heart to heart,
With looks and smiles that spoke of heaven,
And gave us language to impart
The blissful thoughts itself had given.

Domestic peace ! best joy of earth,
When shall we all thy value learn ?
White angel, to our sorrowing hearth,
Return,—oh, graciously return !

Monday night,
May 11, 1846.

Written during the time that the brother of the Brontë sisters, Patrick Branwell Brontë, was disturbing the home at Haworth Parsonage by his intemperance, and 'frantic folly,' *i.e.* his declarations of love for the wife of his former employer.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

MIRTH AND MOURNING

OH ! cast away your sorrow ;—
A while, at least, be gay !
If grief must come to-morrow,
At least be glad to-day !

How can you still be sighing
When smiles are everywhere ?
The little birds are flying
So blithely through the air ;

The sunshine glows so brightly
O'er all the blooming earth ;
And every heart beats lightly ;
Each face is full of mirth.

' I always feel the deepest gloom
When day most brightly shines :
When Nature shows the fairest bloom
My spirit most repines ;

' For in the brightest noon-tide glow
The dungeon's light is dim ;
Though freshest winds around us blow,
No breath can visit *him*.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

‘ If he must sit in twilight gloom,
Can I enjoy the sight
Of mountains clad in purple bloom,
And rocks in sunshine bright ?

‘ My heart may well be desolate,
These tears may well arise,
While prison-wall and iron-grate
Oppress his weary eyes.’

But think of him to-morrow,
And join your comrades now ;
That constant cloud of sorrow
Ill suits so young a brow.

Hark how their merry voices
Are sounding far and near !
While all the world rejoices,
Can you sit moping here ?

‘ When others’ hearts most lightly bound,
Mine feels the most oppressed ;
When smiling faces greet me round,
My sorrow will not rest.

‘ I think of him whose faintest smile
Was sunshine to my heart ;
Whose lightest word could care beguile,
And blissful thoughts impart.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

‘ I think how he would bless that sun
And love this glorious scene ;
I think of all that has been done,
And all that might have been.

‘ Those sparkling eyes that blessed me so
Are dim with weeping now ;
And blighted hope and burning woe
Have ploughed that marble brow.

‘ What waste of youth, what hopes destroyed,
What days of pining care,
What weary nights of comfort void,
Art thou condemned to bear !

‘ Oh ! if my love must suffer so,
And wholly for my sake,
What marvel that my tears should flow,
Or that my heart should break ? ’

ZERONA.

ANNE BRONTË.

July 15, 1846.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

WEEP NOT TOO MUCH, MY DARLING

WEEP not too much, my darling ;
Sigh not too oft for me ;
Say not the face of Nature
Has lost its charms for thee.
I have enough of anguish
In my own breast alone ;
Thou canst not ease the burden, love,
By adding still thy own.

I know the faith and fervour
Of that true heart of thine ;
But I would have it hopeful
As thou wouldst render mine.
At night when I lie waking,
More soothing it will be
To say, ‘ She slumbers calmly now,’
Than say, ‘ She weeps for me.’

When through the prison-grating
The holy moon-beams shine,
And I am wildly longing
To see the orb divine ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Not crossed, deformed, and sullied,
By those relentless bars
That will not show the crescent moon,
And scarce the twinkling stars,

It is my only comfort
To think, that unto thee
The sight is not forbidden,
The face of Heaven is free.
If I could think Zerkow
Is gazing upward now ;
Is gazing with a tearless eye,
A calm, unruffled brow ;

That moon upon her spirit
Sheds sweet, celestial balm,—
The thought, like Angel's whisper,
My misery would calm.
And when, at early morning,
A faint flush comes to me
Reflected from those glowing skies
I almost weep to see ;

Or when I catch the murmur
Of gently swaying trees,
Or hear the louder swelling
Of the soul-inspiring breeze,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And pant to feel its freshness
Upon my burning brow,
Or sigh to see the twinkling leaf,
And watch the waving bough ;

If from those fruitless yearnings
Thou wouldst deliver me,
Say that the charms of Nature
Are lovely still to thee.
While I am thus repining,
Oh ! let me but believe,
' These pleasures are not lost to her,'
And I will cease to grieve.

Oh ! scorn not Nature's bounties :
My soul partakes with thee !
Drink bliss from all her fountains :
Drink for thyself and me !
Say not, ' My soul is buried
In dungeon gloom with thine ' ;
But say, ' *His* heart is here with me,
His spirit drinks with mine ! '

A—— E——.

ANNE BRONTË.

July 20, 1846.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE POWER OF LOVE

LOVE, indeed thy strength is mighty,
Thus alone such strife to bear ;
Three 'gainst one, and never ceasing—
Death, and Madness, and Despair.

'Tis not my own strength has saved me ;
Health, and hope, and fortitude,
But for love, had long since failed me ;
Heart and soul had sunk subdued.

Often in my wild impatience
I have lost my trust in Heaven,
And my soul has tossed and struggled
Like a vessel tempest driven.

But the voice of my belovèd
In my ear has seemed to say—
' Be thou patient, if thou lov'st me,'
And the storm has passed away.

When, outworn with weary thinking,
Sight and thought were waxing dim,
And my mind began to wander,
And my brain began to swim,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Then those hands outstretched to save me
Seemed to call me back again ;
Those dark eyes did so implore me
To once more let reason reign,

That I could not but remember
How his hopes were fixed on me,
And, with one determined effort,
Rose, and shook my spirit free.

When hope leaves my weary spirit
And all power to hold it gone,
That loved voice so loudly prays me,
' For *my* sake, keep hoping on,'

That, at once my strength renewing,
Though Despair had crushed me down,
I can burst his bonds asunder,
And defy his deadliest frown.

When, from nights of restless tossing,
Days of gloom and pining care,
Pain and weakness still increasing
Seem to whisper, ' Death is near.'

And I almost bid him welcome
Knowing he would bring release,
Weary of this restless struggle,
Longing to repose in peace—

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Then a glance of fond approval
Bids such selfish longings flee,
And a voice of matchless music
Murmurs, ' Cherish life for me.'

Roused to new-born strength and courage,
Pain and grief I cast away ;
Health and life I keenly follow,
Mighty Death is held at bay.

Yes, my Love, I will be patient !
Firm and bold my heart shall be ;
Fear not, though this life is dreary,
I can bear it well for thee.

¹ Let our foes still rain upon me
Cruel wrongs and taunting scorn ;
'Tis for thee their hate pursues me,
And, for thee, it shall be borne !

A. E. ANNE BRONTË.
August 13, 1846.

¹ The last verse is now printed for the first time.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

I DREAMT LAST NIGHT

I DREAMT last night, and in that dream
My boyhood's heart was mine again ;
These latter years did nothing seem
With all their mingled joy and pain ;

Their thousand deeds of good and ill,
Their hopes which time did not fulfil,
Their glorious moments of success,
Their love that closed in bitterness,

Their hate that grew with growing strength,
Their darling projects—dropped at length,
And higher aims that still prevail ;
For I must perish ere they fail,—

That crowning object of my life,
The end of all my toil and strife,
Source of my virtues and my crimes,
For which I 've toiled and striven in vain,—
But if I fail a thousand times,
Still I will toil and strive again.

Yet even if this was then forgot,
My present heart and soul were not ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

All the rough lessons life has taught,
That are become a part of me,
A moment's sleep to nothing brought
And made me what I used to be ;

And I was roaming light and gay,
Upon a breezy summer day,
A bold and careless youth ;
No guilty stain was on my mind,
And, if not over soft or kind,
My heart was full of truth.

It was a well-known mountain scene,
Wild steeps, with rugged glens between,
I should have thirsted to explore
Had I not trod them oft before ;

A younger boy was with me there,
His hand upon my shoulder leant ;
His heart, like mine, was free from care,
His breath with sportive toil was spent ;

For my rough pastimes he would share,
And equal dangers loved to dare,
Though seldom I would care to vie
In learning's keen pursuit with him ;—
I loved the free and open sky
Better than books and tutors grim ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And we had wandered far that day
O'er that forbidden ground away :
Ground, to our rebel feet how dear,—
Danger and freedom both were there !—
Had climbed the steep and coursed the dale,
Until his strength began to fail.

He bade me pause and breathe awhile,
But spoke it with a happy smile ;
His lips were parted to inhale
The breeze that swept the ferny dale,

And chased the clouds across the sky
And waved his locks in passing by,
And fanned my cheek—so real did seem
This strange, untrue, but truth-like dream.

And as we stood, I laughed to see
His fair young cheek so brightly glow ;
He turned his sparkling eyes to me
With looks no painter's art could show,

Nor words portray, but earnest mirth,
And truthful love I there descried,
And, while I thought upon his worth,
My bosom glowed with joy and pride.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

I could have kissed his forehead fair,
I could have clasped him to my heart,
But tenderness with me was rare,
And I must take a rougher part ;

I seized him in my boisterous mirth,
I bore him struggling to the earth,
And grappling, strength for strength, we strove,
He half in wrath, I all for love.

But I gave o'er that strife at length,
Ashamed of my superior strength,
The rather that I marked his eye
Kindle as if a change were nigh.

We paused to breathe a little space,
Reclining on the heather-brae ;
But still I gazed upon his face,
To watch the shadow pass away.

I grasped his hand, and it had fled :
A smile, a laugh, and all was well ;
Upon my breast he leant his head,
And into graver talk we fell,—

More serious, yet so blest did seem
That calm communion then,
That, when I found it but a dream,
I longed to sleep again.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

At first remembrance slowly woke,
 Surprise, regret, successive rose,
That Love's strong cords should thus be broke
 And dearest friends turn deadliest foes.

Then, like a cold, o'erwhelming flood
 Upon my soul it burst ;—
This heart had thirsted for his blood,
 This hand allayed that thirst !

These eyes had watched, without a tear,
 His dying agony ;
These ears, unmoved, had heard his prayer,
This tongue had cursed him suffering there,
 And mocked him bitterly !

Unwonted weakness o'er me crept ;
I sighed—nay, weaker still—I *wept* !
Wept like a woman o'er the deed
 I had been proud to do ;
As I had made his bosom bleed,
 My own was bleeding too.

Back, foolish tears ! the man I slew
 Was not the boy I cherished so ;
And that young arm that clasped the friend
 Was not the same that stabbed the foe ;
By time and adverse thoughts estranged,
And wrongs and vengeance, both were changed.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Repentance now were worse than vain :
Time's current cannot backward run ;
And, be the action wrong or right,
It is for ever done.

*Then reap the fruits—I've said his death
Should be my Country's gain :
If not—then I have spent my breath
And spilt his blood in vain !

And I have laboured hard and long,
But little good obtained ;
My foes are many yet, and strong ;
Not half the battle's gained ;

For, still, the greater deeds I've done,
The more I have to do ;
The faster I can journey on,
The farther I must go.

If Fortune favoured for a while,
I could not rest beneath her smile,
Nor triumph in success ;
When I have gained one river's shore
A wilder torrent, stretched before,
Defies me with its deafening roar,
And onward I must press.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And much I doubt this work of strife
In blood and death begun,
Will call for many a victim more
Before the cause is won.

Well ! my own life I 'd freely give
Ere I would fail in my design ;
The cause must prosper if I live,
And I will die if it decline.
Advanced thus far I 'll not recede,
Whether to vanquish or to bleed ;
Onward, unchecked, I must proceed,
Be Death, or Victory, mine !

September 12, 1846.

150 lines.

E. Z.

* The last 31 lines are now printed for the first time. The remainder of the poem first appeared in *Brontë Poems*, 1915.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE LOVER

GLOOMILY the clouds are sailing
O'er the dimly moonlit sky ;
Dolefully the wind is wailing,
Not another sound is nigh.

Only I can hear it sweeping
Heath-clad hill and woodland dale ;
And at times the night's sad weeping
Sounds above its dying wail.

Now the struggling moonbeams glimmer,
Now the shadows deeper fall,
Till the dim light waxing dimmer
Scarce reveals yon stately hall.

All beneath its roof are sleeping ;
Such a silence reigns around,
I can hear the cold rain steeping
Dripping roof and plashy ground.

No ! not all are wrapped in slumber :
At yon chamber window stands
One whose years are few in number,
Sorrow marks his claspéd hands.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

From the open casement bending
He surveys the murky skies ;
Dreary sighs his bosom rending,
Hot tears gushing from his eyes.

‘ Now that Autumn’s charms are dying,
Summer’s glories long since gone,
Faded leaves on damp earth lying,
Hoary Winter striding on—

‘ ’Tis no marvel skies are lowering,
Winds are moaning thus around,
And cold rain with ceaseless pouring
Swells the stream and swamps the ground.’

But such wild, such bitter, grieving
Fits not slender boys like thee ;
Those deep sighs should not be heaving
Breasts so young as thine must be.

Life with thee is only springing,
Summer in thy pathway lies ;
Every day is nearer bringing
June’s bright flowers and glowing skies.

Ah, he sees no brighter morrow !
He is not too young to prove
All the pain and all the sorrow
That attend the steps of love.

October 1846.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

SEVERED AND GONE

SEVERED and gone, so many years,
And art thou still so dear to me,
That throbbing heart and burning tears
Can witness how I clung to thee ?

I know that in the narrow tomb
The form I loved was buried deep,
And left in silence and in gloom
To slumber out its dreamless sleep.

*I know the corner where it lies
Is but a dreary place of rest :
The charnel moisture never dries
From the dark flagstone o'er its breast.

*For there the sunbeams never shine,
Nor ever breathes the freshening air :
But not for this do I repine,
For my belovéd is not there.

*Ah, no ! I do not think of thee
As festering there in slow decay :
'Tis this sole thought oppresses me,
That thou art gone so far away.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

For ever gone. And I, by night
Have prayed, within my silent room,
That Heaven would grant a burst of light
Its cheerless darkness to illumine,

And give thee to my longing eyes
A moment, as thou shinest now,
Fresh from thy mansion in the skies,
With all its glory on thy brow.

Wild was the wish, intense the gaze
I fixed upon the murky air,
Expectant that a kindling blaze
Would strike my raptured vision there,—

A shape these human nerves would thrill,
A majesty that might appal,
Did not thy earthly likeness still
Gleam softly, gladly through it all.

False hope ! vain prayer ! It might not be
That thou shouldst visit earth again ;
I called on heaven—I called on thee—
And watched, and waited, all in vain !

*Had I one treasured lock of thine,
How it would bless these longing eyes !
Or if thy pictured form were mine,
What gold should rob me of the prize ?

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

A few cold words on yonder stone,
A corpse as cold as they can be ;
Vain words and mouldering dust, alone,—
Can this be all that 's left of thee ?

Ah, no ! thy spirit lingers still
Where'er thy sunny smile was seen ;
There 's less of darkness, less of chill
On earth, than if thou hadst not been.

*Thou breathest in my bosom yet,
And dwellest in my beating heart ;
And while I cannot quite forget,
Thou, darling, canst not quite depart.

Life seems more sweet that thou didst live,
And men more true that thou wert one ;
Nothing is lost that thou didst give,
Nothing destroyed that thou hast done.

April 1847.

Note.—The five verses marked with an asterisk (*) were first printed by Mr. T. J. Wise in *Dreams and Other Poems*, 1917.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE THREE GUIDES

SPIRIT of Earth ! thy hand is chill :
I 've felt its icy clasp ;
And, shuddering, I remember still
That stony-hearted grasp.
Thine eye bids love and joy depart :
Oh, turn its gaze from me !
It presses down my shrinking heart ;
I will not walk with thee !

‘ Wisdom is mine,’ I 've heard thee say :
‘ Beneath my searching eye
All mist and darkness melt away,
Phantoms and fables fly.
Before me truth can stand alone,
The naked, solid truth ;
And man matured my worth will own,
If I am shunned by youth.

‘ Firm is my tread, and sure though slow ;
My footsteps never slide ;
And he that follows me shall know
I am the surest guide.’

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Thy boast is vain ; but were it true
That thou couldst safely steer
Life's rough and devious pathway through,
Such guidance I should fear.

How could I bear to walk for aye,
With eyes to earthward prone,
O'er trampled weeds and miry clay,
And sand and flinty stone ;
Never the glorious view to greet
Of hill and dale and sky ;
To see that Nature's charms are sweet,
Or feel that Heaven is nigh ?

If in my heart arose a spring,
A gush of thought divine,
At once stagnation thou wouldst bring
With that cold touch of thine.
If, glancing up, I sought to snatch
But one glimpse of the sky,
My baffled gaze would only catch
Thy heartless, cold grey eye.

If to the breezes wandering near
I listened eagerly,
And deemed an angel's tongue to hear
That whispered hope to me,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

That heavenly music would be drowned
In thy harsh, droning voice ;
Nor inward thought, nor sight, nor sound
Might my sad soul rejoice.

Dull is thine ear, unheard by thee
The still, small voice of Heaven ;
Thine eyes are dim and cannot see
The helps that God has given.
There is a bridge o'er every flood
Which thou canst not perceive ;
A path through every tangled wood,
But thou wilt not believe.

Striving to make thy way by force,
Toil-spent and bramble-torn,
Thou 'lt fell the tree that checks thy course
And burst through brier and thorn :
And, pausing by the river's side,
Poor reasoner ! thou wilt deem,
By casting pebbles in its tide,
To cross the swelling stream.

Right through the flinty rock thou 'lt try
Thy toilsome way to bore,
Regardless of the pathway nigh
That would conduct thee o'er.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Not only art thou, then, unkind,
And freezing cold to me,
But unbelieving, deaf, and blind :
I will not walk with thee !

Spirit of Pride ! thy wings are strong,
Thine eyes like lightning shine ;
Ecstatic joys to thee belong,
And powers almost divine.
But 'tis a false, destructive blaze
Within those eyes I see ;
Turn hence their fascinating gaze ;
I will not follow thee !

' Coward and fool ! ' thou may'st reply,
' Walk on the common sod ;
Go, trace with timid foot and eye
The steps by others trod.
'Tis best the beaten path to keep,
The ancient faith to hold ;
To pasture with thy fellow-sheep,
And lie within the fold.

' Cling to the earth, poor grovelling worm ;
'Tis not for thee to soar
Against the fury of the storm,
Amid the thunder's roar !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

There 's glory in that daring strife
Unknown, undreamt by thee ;
There 's speechless rapture in the life
Of those who follow me.'

Yes, I have seen thy votaries oft,
Upheld by thee their guide,
In strength and courage mount aloft
The steepy mountain-side ;
I 've seen them stand against the sky,
And gazing from below,
Beheld thy lightning in their eye,
Thy triumph on their brow.

Oh, I have felt what glory then,
What transport must be theirs !
So far above their fellow-men,
Above their toils and cares ;
Inhaling Nature's purest breath,
Her riches round them spread,
The wide expanse of earth beneath,
Heaven's glories overhead !

But I have seen them helpless, dashed
Down to a bloody grave,
And still thy ruthless eye has flashed,
Thy strong hand did not save ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

I 've seen some o'er the mountain's brow
Sustained awhile by thee,
O'er rocks of ice, and hills of snow,
Bound fearless, wild, and free.

Bold and exultant was their mien,
While thou didst cheer them on ;
But evening fell,—and then, I ween,
Their faithless guide was gone.
Alas ! how fared thy favourites then—
Lone, helpless, weary, cold ?
Did ever wanderer find again
The path he left of old ?

Where is their glory, where the pride
That swelled their hearts before ?
Where now the courage that defied
The mightiest tempest's roar ?
What shall they do when night grows black,
When angry storms arise ?
Who now will lead them to the track
Thou taught'st them to despise ?

Spirit of Pride ! it needs not this
To make me shun thy wiles,
Renounce thy triumph and thy bliss,
Thy honours and thy smiles !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Bright as thou art, and bold, and strong,
That fierce glance wins not me ;
And I abhor thy scoffing tongue ;—
I will not follow thee !

Spirit of Faith ! be thou my guide,
Oh, clasp my hand in thine,
And let me never quit thy side ;
Thy comforts are divine !
Earth calls thee blind, misguided one,—
But who can show like thee
Forgotten things that have been done,
And things that are to be ?

Secrets concealed from Nature's ken,
Who like thee can declare ?
Or who like thee to erring men
God's holy will can bear ?
Pride scorns thee for thy lowly mien—
But who like thee can rise
Above this toilsome, sordid scene,
Beyond the holy skies ?

Meek is thine eye and soft thy voice,
But wondrous is thy might,
To make the wretched soul rejoice,
To give the simple light !

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

And still to all that seek thy way
This magic power is given,—
E'en while their footsteps press the clay,
Their souls ascend to Heaven.

Danger surrounds them,—pain and woe
Their portion here must be,
But only they that trust thee know
What comfort dwells with thee ;
Strength to sustain their drooping powers,
And vigour to defend,—
Thou pole-star of my darkest hours,
Affliction's firmest friend !

Day does not always mark our way,
Night's shadows ¹ oft appal,
But lead me, and I cannot stray,—
Hold me, I shall not fall ;
Sustain me, I shall never faint,
How rough soe'er may be
My upward road—nor moan, nor plaint
Shall mar my trust in thee.

Narrow the path by which we go,
And oft it turns aside
From pleasant meads where roses blow,
And peaceful ² waters glide ;

Variations in MS. :—

¹ terrors.

² murmuring.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Where flowery turf lies green and soft,
And gentle gales are sweet,
To where dark mountains frown aloft,
Hard rocks distress the feet,—

Deserts beyond lie bleak and bare,
And keen winds round us blow ;
But if thy hand conducts me there,
The way is right, I know.

I have no wish to turn away ;
My spirit does not quail ¹,—
How can it while I hear thee say,
‘ Press forward and prevail ! ’

Even above the tempest’s swell
I hear thy voice of love,—
Of hope and peace, I hear thee tell,
And that blest home above ;
Through pain and death I can rejoice,
If but thy strength be mine,—
Earth hath no music like thy voice,
Life owns no joy like thine !

Spirit of Faith, I ’ll go with thee !
Thou, if I hold thee fast,
Wilt guide, defend, and strengthen me,
And bear ² me home at last ;

Variations in MS. :—

¹ fail.

² bring.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

By thy help all things I can do,
In thy strength all things bear,—
Teach me, for thou art just and true ;
Smile on me, thou art fair !

ANNE BRONTË.

August 11, 1847.

Dr. James Martineau and Dr. Hunter extracted twenty-four lines from 'The Three Guides' to make a hymn, commencing :

' Spirit of Faith ! be thou my guide,'

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

FAREWELL TO THEE ! BUT NOT FAREWELL

FAREWELL to thee ! but not farewell
To all my fondest thoughts of thee :
Within my heart they still shall dwell ;
And they shall cheer and comfort me.

O beautiful, and full of grace !
If thou hadst never met mine eye,
I had not dreamed a living face
Could fancied charms so far outvie.

If I may ne'er behold again
That form and face so dear to me,
Nor hear thy voice, still would I fain
Preserve for aye their memory.

That voice, the magic of whose tone
Could wake an echo in my breast,
Creating feelings that, alone,
Can make my tranced spirit blest.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

That laughing eye, whose sunny beam
My memory would not cherish less ;—
And oh, that smile ! whose joyous gleam
No mortal language can express.

Adieu ! but let me cherish still
The hope with which I cannot part.
Contempt may wound, and coldness chill,
But still it lingers in my heart.

And who can tell but Heaven, at last,
May answer all my thousand prayers,
And bid the future pay the past
With joy for anguish, smiles for tears.

Undated, c. 1847.
Published in 1848.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

SELF-COMMUNION

‘ THE mist is resting on the hill ;
The smoke is hanging in the air ;
The very clouds are standing still :
A breathless calm broods everywhere.
Thou pilgrim through this vale of tears,
Thou, too, a little moment cease
Thy anxious toil and fluttering fears,
And rest thee, for a while, in peace.’

‘ I would, but Time keeps working still
And moving on for good or ill :
He will not rest nor stay.
In pain or ease, in smiles or tears,
He still keeps adding to my years
And stealing life away.
His footsteps in the ceaseless sound
Of yonder clock I seem to hear,
That through this stillness so profound
Distinctly strikes the vacant ear.¹
For ever striding on and on,
He pauses not by night or day ;
And all my life will soon be gone
As these past years have slipped away.

¹ Cancelled reading :—

So keenly strikes the vacant ear.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

He took my childhood long ago,
And then my early youth ; and lo,
 He steals away my prime !
I cannot see how fast it goes,
But well my inward spirit knows
 The wasting power of time.’

‘ Time steals thy moments, drinks thy breath,
 Changes and wastes thy mortal frame ;
But though he gives the clay to death,
 He cannot touch the inward flame.
Nay, though he steals thy years away,
 Their memory is left thee still,
And every month and every day ¹
 Leaves some effect of good or ill.
The wise will find in Memory’s store
A help for that which lies before
 To guide their course aright ;
Then, hush thy plaints and calm thy fears ;
Look back on these departed years,
 And say, what meets thy sight ? ’

‘ I see, far back, a helpless child,
 Feeble and full of causeless fears,
Simple and easily beguiled
 To credit all it hears.

¹ Cancelled reading :—

And every passing night and day

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

More timid than the wild wood-dove,
Yet trusting to another's care,
And finding in protecting love
Its only refuge from despair,—
Its only balm for every woe,
The only bliss its soul can know ;—
Still hiding in its breast.
A tender heart too prone to weep,
A love so earnest, strong, and deep
It could not be exprest.
Poor helpless thing ! what can it do
Life's stormy cares and toils among ;—
How tread this weary desert through
That awes the brave and tires the strong ?
Where shall it centre so much trust ¹
Where truth maintains so little sway,
Where seeming fruit is bitter dust,
And kisses oft to death betray ?

How oft must sin and falsehood grieve
A heart so ready to believe,
And willing to admire ?
With strength so feeble, fears so strong,
Amid this selfish bustling throng,
How will it faint and tire !

¹ Cancelled reading :—

What shall it do with all that trust

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

That tender love so warm and deep,
How can it flourish here below ?
What bitter floods of tears must steep
The stony soil where it would grow !
O earth ! a rocky breast is thine—
A hard soil and a cruel clime,
Where tender plants must droop and pine,
Or alter with transforming time.
That soul, that clings to sympathy,
As ivy clasps the forest tree,
How can it stand alone ?
That heart so prone to overflow
E'en at the thought of other's woe,
How will it bear its own ?
How, if a sparrow's death can wring
Such bitter tear-floods from the eye,
Will it behold the suffering
Of struggling, lost humanity ?
The torturing pain, the pining grief,
The sin-degraded misery,
The anguish that defies relief ? '

' Look back again—What dost thou see ? '

' I see one kneeling on the sod,
With infant hands upraised to Heaven,—¹

¹ Cancelled reading :—

With infant hands upheld to Heaven,—

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

A young heart feeling after God,
Oft baffled, never backward driven.
Mistaken oft, and oft astray,
It strives to find the narrow way,
But gropes and toils alone ;
That inner life of strife and tears,
Of kindling hopes and lowering fears
To none but God is known.¹
'Tis better thus ; for man would scorn
Those childish prayers, those artless cries,
That darkling spirit tossed and torn,
But God will not despise !
We may regret such waste of tears :
Such darkly toiling misery ;
Such 'wildering doubts and harrowing fears,
Where joy and thankfulness should be ;
But wait, and Heaven will send relief.
Let patience have her perfect work ;
Lo, strength and wisdom spring from grief,
And joys behind afflictions lurk !
It asked for light, and it was heard ;
God grants that struggling soul repose
And, guided by His holy word,
It wiser than its teachers grows.
It gains the upward path at length,
And passes on from strength to strength,

¹ Cancelled reading :—

To none on earth is known.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Leaning on Heaven the while :
Night's shades departing one by one,
It sees at last the rising sun,
And feels his cheering smile.
In all its darkness and distress
For light it sought, to God it cried ;
And through the pathless wilderness,
He was its comfort and its guide.'

' So it was, and so will it be ;
Thy God will guide and strengthen thee ;
His goodness cannot fail.
The sun that on thy morning rose
Will light thee to the evening's close,
Whatever storms assail.'

' *God* alters not ; but *Time* on me
A wide and wondrous change has wrought :
And in these parted years I see
Cause for grave care and saddening thought.
I see that time, and toil, and truth
An inward hardness can impart,—
Can freeze the generous blood of youth,
And steel full fast the tender heart.'

' Bless God for that divine decree !—
That hardness comes with misery,
And suffering deadens pain ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

That at the frequent sight of woe
E'en Pity's tears forget to flow,
If reason still remain !
Reason, with conscience by her side,
But gathers strength from toil and truth ;
And she will prove a surer guide
Than those sweet instincts of our youth.
Thou that hast known such anguish sore
In weeping where thou couldst not bless,
Canst *thou* that softness so deplore—
That suffering, shrinking tenderness ?
Thou that hast felt what cankering care
A loving heart is doomed to bear,
Say, how canst *thou* regret
That fires unfed must fall away,
Long droughts can dry the softest clay,
And cold will cold beget ? '

' Nay, but 'tis hard to feel that chill
Come creeping o'er the shuddering heart.
Love may be full of pain, but still,
'Tis sad to see it so depart,—
To watch that fire whose genial glow
Was formed to comfort and to cheer,
For want of fuel, fading so,
Sinking to embers dull and drear,—
To see the soft soil turned to stone
For lack of kindly showers,—

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

To see those yearnings of the breast,
Pining to bless and to be blest,
Drop withered, frozen one by one,
Till, centred in itself alone,
 It wastes its blighted powers.

‘Oh, I have known a wondrous joy
 In early friendship’s pure delight,—
A genial bliss that could not cloy—
 My sun by day, my moon by night.
Absence, indeed, was sore distress,
 And thought of death was anguish keen,
And there was cruel bitterness
 When jarring discords rose between ;¹
And sometimes it was grief to know
 My fondness was but half returned.
But this was nothing to the woe
 With which another truth was learned :—
That I must check, or nurse apart,
Full many an impulse of the heart
 And many a darling thought :
What my soul worshipped, sought, and prized,²
Were slighted, questioned, or despised ;—
 This pained me more than aught.
And as my love the warmer glowed
 The deeper would that anguish sink,

Cancelled readings :—

¹ When angry passions rose between ;

² For things I worshipped, sought, and prized,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

That this dark stream between us flowed,
 Though both stood bending o'er its brink ;
Until, at last, I learned to bear
 A colder heart within my breast ;
To share such thoughts as I could share,
 And calmly keep the rest.
I saw that they were sundered now,
 The trees that at the root were one :
They yet might mingle leaf and bough,
 But still the stems must stand alone.
Oh, love is sweet of every kind !
 'Tis sweet the helpless to befriend,
To watch the young unfolding mind,
 To guide, to shelter, and defend :
To lavish tender toil and care,
 And ask for nothing back again,
But that our smiles a blessing bear
 And all our toil be not in vain.
And sweeter far than words can tell
Their love whose ardent bosoms swell
 With thoughts they need not hide ;
Where fortune frowns not on their joy,
And Prudence seeks not to destroy,
 Nor Reason to deride.

‘ Whose love may freely gush and flow,
 Unchecked, unchilled, by doubt or fear,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

For in their inmost hearts they know
It is not vainly nourished there.
They know that in a kindred breast
Their long desires have found a home,
Where heart and soul may kindly rest,¹
Weary and lorn no more to roam.
Their dreams of bliss were not in vain,²
As they love they are loved again,
And they can bless as they are blessed.

‘Oh, vainly might I seek to show
The joys from happy love that flow !
The warmest words are all too cold
The secret transports to unfold
Of simplest word or softest sigh,
Or from the glancing of an eye
To say what rapture beams ;
One look that bids our fears depart,
And well assures the trusting heart ;
It beats not in the world alone—
Such speechless rapture I have known,
But only in my dreams.

‘My life has been a morning sky
Where Hope her rainbow glories cast

Cancelled readings :—

¹ Where heart may bask and spirit rest,

² They have not lived nor hoped in vain,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

O'er kindling vapours far and nigh :
And, if the colours faded fast,
Ere one bright hue had died away
Another o'er its ashes gleamed ;
And if the lower clouds were grey,
The mists above more brightly beamed.
But not for long ;—at length behold,
Those tints less warm, less radiant grew ;
Till but one speck of paly gold
Glimmered through clouds of saddening hue.
And I am calmly waiting now
To see that also pass away,
And leave, above the dark hill's brow,
A rayless arch of sombre grey.'

' So must it fare with all thy race
Who seek in earthly things their joy :
So fading hopes lost hopes shall chase,¹
Till Disappointment all destroy.
But they that fix their hopes on high
Shall, in the blue-refulgent sky,
The sun's transcendent light,
Behold a purer, deeper glow
Than these uncertain gleams can show,
However fair or bright.

¹ Alternative reading :—

So lying hopes false hopes shall chase,

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTE

Oh, weak of heart ! why thus deplore
That Truth will Fancy's dreams destroy ?
Did I not tell thee, years before,¹
Life was for labour, not for joy ?
Cease, selfish spirit, to repine ;
O'er thine own ills no longer grieve ;
Lo, there are sufferings worse than thine,
Which thou mayst labour to relieve.
If Time indeed too swiftly flies,
Gird on thine armour, haste, arise,
For thou hast much to do ;—
To lighten woe, to trample sin,
And foes without and foes within
To combat and subdue.
Earth hath too much of sin and pain :
The bitter cup—the binding chain ²
Dost thou indeed lament ?
Let not thy weary spirit sink ;
But strive—not by one drop or link
The evil to augment.
Strive rather thou, by peace and joy,
The bitter poison to destroy,
The tyrant chain to break.³

¹ Alternative reading :—

Did I not tell thee, long before,

² Cancelled reading :—

This bitter cup—that binding chain

³ Alternative reading :—

The cruel bonds to break.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Oh, strive ! and if thy strength be small,
Strive yet the more, and spend it all ¹

For Love and Wisdom's sake ! '

' Oh, I have striven both hard and long, ²

But many are my foes and strong.

My gains are light—my progress slow ;

For hard 's the way I have to go,

And my worst enemies, I know,

Are these within my breast ;

And it is hard to toil for aye,—

Through sultry noon and twilight grey

To toil and never rest.'

' There is a rest beyond the grave,

A lasting rest from pain and sin,

Where dwell the faithful and the brave ;

But they must strive who seek to win.'

' Show me that rest—I ask no more.

Oh, drive these misty doubts away ; ³

And let me see that sunny shore,

However far away !

Cancelled readings :—

¹ Oh, toil ! and if thy strength be small,
Toil yet the more, and spend it all

² Oh, I have toiled both hard and long,

³ Alternative reading :—

Oh, drive these gloomy mists away ;

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

However wide this rolling sea,
However wild my passage be,¹
How'er my bark be tempest-tossed,
 May it but reach that haven fair,
 May I but land and wander there,
With those that I have loved and lost ;
With such a glorious hope in view,
I'll gladly toil and suffer too.
Rest *without* toil I would not ask ;
I would not shun the hardest task ;
Toil is my glory—Grief my gain,
If God's approval they obtain.²
Could I but hear my Saviour say,—
 “ I know thy patience and thy love ;
How thou hast held the narrow way,
For My sake laboured night and day,
 And watched, and striven with them that
 strove ;
And still hast borne, and didst not faint,”—
 Oh, this would be reward indeed ! ’

‘ Press forward, then, without complaint ;
 Labour and love—and such shall be thy
 meed.’

April 17, 1848.

Cancelled readings :—

¹ However bleak my passage be,

² Nay, welcome labour, grief, and pain
 While God's approval I can gain.

Note by the author.—Begun in November 1847.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

THE NARROW WAY

BELIEVE not those who say
The upward path is smooth,¹
Lest thou shouldst stumble in the way,
And faint before the truth.

It is the only road
Unto the realms of joy ; ²
But he who seeks that blest abode
Must all his powers employ.

Bright hopes and pure delights
Upon his course may beam,
And there, amid the sternest ³ heights,
The sweetest flowerets gleam.

On all her breezes borne,
Earth yields no scents like those ;
But he that dares not grasp the thorn
Should never crave the rose.

Cancelled readings :—

¹ The Heavenward path is smooth,

² That leads to perfect joy ;
But they who seek that blest abode
Must all their powers employ.

³ Variation in MS. : wildest.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Arm—arm thee for the fight !
Cast useless loads away ;
Watch through the darkest hours of night,
Toil through the hottest day.

Crush pride into the dust,
Or thou must needs be slack ;
And trample down rebellious lust,
Or it will hold thee back.

Seek not thy honour here ;
Waive pleasure and renown ;
The world's dread scoff undaunted bear,
And face its deadliest frown.

To labour and to love,
To pardon and endure,
To lift thy heart to God above,
And keep thy conscience pure ;

Be this thy constant aim,
Thy hope,¹ thy chief delight ;
What matter who should whisper blame,
Or who should scorn or slight ?

¹ Variation in MS. : prayer.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

What matter, if thy God approve,
And if, within thy breast,
Thou feel the comfort of His love,
The earnest of His rest ?

A. B.

April 27, 1848.

40 lines.

FRAGMENT

YES, I will take a cheerful tone,
And feign to share their heartless glee ;
But I would rather weep alone
Than laugh amid their revelry.

January 26, 1849.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

LAST LINES

I HOPED, that with the brave and strong,
My portioned task might lie ;
To toil amid the busy throng,
With purpose pure and high.

But God has fixed another part,
And He has fixed it well ;
I said so with my bleeding heart,
When first the anguish fell.

¹ A dreadful darkness closes in
On my bewildered mind ;
Oh, let me suffer and not sin,
Be tortured, yet resigned.

¹ Shall I with joy thy blessings share
And not endure their loss ?
Or hope the martyr's crown to wear
And cast away the cross ?

¹ These two verses were first printed in *Brontë Poems*, edited by A. C. Benson, 1915.

This poem, slightly altered, may be found in some of the hymnals of the churches.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Thou, God, hast taken our delight,¹
Our treasured hope away ;
Thou bidst us now weep through the night
And sorrow through the day.

These weary hours will not be lost,
These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, anguish-tost,
Can I but turn to Thee.

² Weak and weary though I lie,
Crushed with sorrow, worn with pain,
I may lift to Heaven mine eye,
And strive to labour not in vain ;

² That inward strife against the sins
That ever wait on suffering
To strike whatever first begins :
Each ill that would corruption bring ;

That ³ secret labour to sustain
With ⁴ humble patience every blow ;
To gather fortitude from pain,
And hope and holiness from woe.

¹ Emily Jane Brontë, who had died on December 19, 1848, a few weeks before this poem was written.

² These two verses are now printed for the first time.

³ 'With,' ⁴ 'In,' appear in all previously printed versions of this poem. The complete poem of twelve verses is now printed for the first time as it appears in the original MS.

POEMS BY ANNE BRONTË

Thus let me serve Thee from my heart,
Whate'er may be my written fate :
Whether thus early to depart,
Or yet a while to wait.

If thou shouldst bring me back to life,
More humbled I should be ;
More wise, more strengthened for the strife,
More apt to lean on Thee.

Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow ;
But, Lord ! whatever be my fate,
Oh, let me serve Thee now !

Finished, January 28, 1849.

‘These lines written, the desk was closed, the pen laid aside—for ever.’—*Note by Charlotte Brontë.*

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